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COMPUTER & CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

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SONIC ADVENTURE



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Front page news! Special Sonic Adventure report from Japan!

sonic adventure

We literally stopped the presses to give you the opportunity to gaze upon the first shots of *Sonic Adventure*, Sonic Team's Dreamcast masterpiece in the making. As good as these screens look, however, nothing can prepare you for what the game looks like in motion. The levels are vastly bigger than anything you've ever experienced, the camera AI exhibits a new level of intelligence and the speed (all running at 60fps) is insanely fast. The big *Sonic Adventure* press conference was held on August 22 at the Tokyo International Forum in downtown Tokyo. Sega spared no expense as they revealed the massive Dreamcast epic, starring their most beloved mascot, to the huge, gyrating crowd in attendance. Premium goods such as limited edition pins and T-shirts were made available exclusively for fans present at the event, as well as an incredible 32 page full-color pamphlet showcasing Sonic Team's stunning designs. Sega's president Irimajiri and project leader Yuji Naka proudly addressed the audience while mind-numbing footage ran in the background. Segatasanshiro made a surprise appearance, too, raising everyone's spirits with cheers and wacky humor.

"Up until now," said Yuji Naka,"we had to compromise by scaling down the specs of the *Sonic* series due to hardware performance. This time we haven't had to compromise *anything*." The project started after Sonic Team completed *Nights*. Yuji and key staff members explored ruins in Mexico, Guatemala, and Peru, witnessed shuttle launches at the Kennedy Space Center, visited Disney World, and analyzed important factories in the Tokyo area. Using digital and analog processing techniques, the photos taken on these trips were converted into high-res textures. *Sonic Adventure's* richly detailed worlds will never pop up and the game moves at 60 fps all the time. There are six playable characters in *SA*: Sonic, Knuckles, Miles, Amy, Big, and E-102, and the game is different for each. At one point all six meet - as you are playing, so are they. When the characters meet, the camera zooms in for speech increments, displaying a high quality anime look and feel. We'll have lots more for you in November including more screens and character profiles. The next big leap in technology is staggering to say the least.



Artwork & Images © Sega. 1998.



All the screens seen here are in game, including the boss in the top middle. Sonic Adventure was shown on development system version 5 (out of 6) . The demos we've been seeing up until now were running on version 2, thus explaining the vivid leap in quality. 100 people are now working on SA for a winter launch.

Gamers' Republic MANIFESTO



publisher's *log*
version 1.5

With the ETA of Sega's Dreamcast just over two months away in Japan, the inevitable question will once again be asked: Will the U.S. and Japanese versions be compatible, or will small, obscure eastern manufacturers along with a handful of import mail-order houses once again line their pockets as the result of an ill-fated business decision? The last thing I want is a seedy cartridge with a half-witted name like "Super Action Gaming Cart!" sticking out of my shiny new white console. If the two units are not made compatible, I think that Sega would be better served to manufacture and sell a converter themselves; at least then the product would meet their standards of workmanship. It would also allow them to build a customer data base, through product registration, of people (mainly hard-core Sega fans) who frequently buy import games. Sega would gain valuable insight on market trends and build a priceless data-base in the process.

Regardless, people will find a way to play import games, as well they should and always have. Keeping a hard-core gamer from a game he can't get here is a physical impossibility. We can dine on international cuisine and enjoy Japanese anime and TV, so why shouldn't we be able to play Japanese games? If you ask me, it's an age-old struggle of which it's high time we put to rest. The import game trade only bolsters a system's fan base. It's not wide spread enough to drastically affect sales in the U.S. (as the most popular imports are those without a U.S. release) and it builds confidence in the manufacturer. Knowing that my Saturn still has life, and will continue to, thanks to Japanese development, feels mighty good. At least 25 memorable Saturn games came out in Japan that, for one reason or another, never made their way stateside, and they are still coming. If those games were playable on the U.S. Saturn, would the system have survived longer and retained greater respect? Oh, I think so. Japanese games are packaged brilliantly and, in the Saturn's case, some truly memorable ones were left behind. Like many other gamers, I'm a 3D goggle wearing, Nomad holding, 32X snapping, Saturn loving, card carrying Sega fan, so I hope that they do it right this time and cut us some slack. Lord knows we deserve it.

Publishers Log special bonus!
Now that the American fat lady is singing, here's a huge list of games left behind that any Saturn user would have been proud to own: *Silhouette Mirage, Radiant Silvergun, Super Tempo, Mystic Defender, Slayers Royale, Lunar II Eternal Blue, Riglordsaga II, SDF Macross, Rabbit, Pocket Fighter, Willy Wombat, Dracula X, Chaos Seed, Metal Slug, Power Drift, Galaxy Force II, Lupin the 3rd, White Witch, Soukyugurentai, Steamgear Mash, Keio-u-gekitai, Assault Suit Leynos II, Blue Seed, Princess Crown, Cotton 2, Airs Adventure, Vampire Savior*, and *Grandia*, the game most likely to have been a full blown *FF7*-sized epic. Those are just the ones in my immediate vicinity, and that's a lot of great games. Just going through them makes me want to relive them and wonder what could have been. *Magic Knight Rayearth* is poised to become the last U.S. Saturn release, a fitting end as well as a shining example of how great the Saturn could have been. Let's hope the Dreamcast gets every opportunity to shine.

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Gamers' Republic™ is published monthly by Millennium Publications, Inc.™, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, Suite no. 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361, USA. Periodicals class postage paid at Escondido, CA, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster send changes of address to Gamers' Republic™, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, Suite no. 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361. Subscriptions: one year (12 issues) US $29.99.

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Wild 9 .25

From the home of Earth Worm Jim and MDK, Wex Major and a cast of nine ascend to the PlayStation, marking Shiny's first foray into next generation platforming. Can they breathe new life into a category they helped mold?



FINAL FANTASY VIII .64

GENEROUSLY PACKED IN WITH BRAVE FENCER MASUSHIDEN, THE DEMO OF FFVIII HAS FINALLY ARRIVED. REACHING FARTHER THAN ANY FF BEFORE, IT PROVES THAT THE NEXT INSTALLMENT WILL TRANSCEND OUR EXPECTATIONS.



Castlevania 64 .36

Travel back to Castlevania one more time with schneider Belmont, Cornell Reinhart, Carrie Eastfield, and the frankenstein-like Kola. Legendary 3D gaming awaits...



Crash 3 .61

Crash returns for his third epic on the PlayStation. Will the third Bandicoot romp prove the king of the trilogy? Free-roaming environments, playable Coco and some aquatic wonderment say yes!



Spiceworld .79

When you're feeling sad and low, they will take you were you wanna' go!

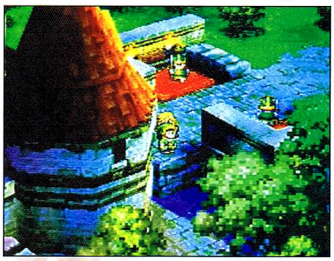
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FRONTLINES

ENTER THE DRAGON QUEST 7! EXCLUSIVE PLAYTEST!

Way back in May 1986, Enix of Japan released the first in a long, successful line of RPGs for Nintendo's Famicom. 12 years later...



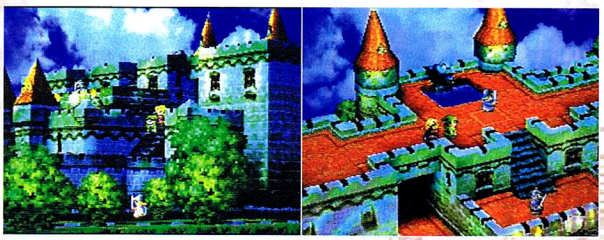


...it is Sony's PlayStation that is to be graced with the seventh installment of the *Dragon Quest* legacy. The *DQ* series has sold over 20 million units to date and has always been prevalent in the industry's watchful eye. So much so that when the game was first announced back in January 1997, fans started to create Internet sites dedicated to *DQ7*. Finally, after what seems like an eternity, *Gamers' Republic* can reveal new screenshots, proving that this game is set to be the best in the series so far. According to Enix, they are creating an awesome new game while promoting "love, courage and fraternity," and retaining the original world of *DQ*. Rest assured, folks, *DQ7* is on the way at last, and the wait will have been more than worth it.

Meanwhile, *GR* was lucky enough to have a quick play-test of *DQ7*, and this what happened. In order to show that development is proceeding well and that the game retains that vital *DQ* feeling, Enix have released the first pictures of the game. They have created a unique 3D graphics engine that keeps all the detail and warmth of their previous sprite versions. Currently there are two areas, the village and the castle. You can walk around them freely and enter all the various rooms and buildings. The loading is very fast and you don't notice any slowdown as you enter and exit places. The version we played had three characters. Using the cross keys you could move in eight directions. By using the L and R keys you could rotate the screen around 360°. The characters are sprites, so there are several patterns that are redrawn depending on the direction you look at them. All the trees, etc., are full polygon and rotate beautifully. Interestingly, in our version you could zoom in and pan out (only two levels). All the photos show the normal play version but you could zoom out to see the entire castle or village. Incredibly, the graphics engine could display all the detail without any slowdown whatsoever, but whether this feature will remain has not been decided.

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We can't wait to explore the massively detailed environments that Enix have in store.

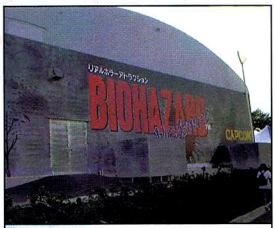


The indoor lighting, texturing, and shading are top notch, greatly adding to the ambience.



While Dragon Quest 7 is still in the early stages of development, these screens clearly show the realistic and intimate feel that Enix have been able to endow to this latest installment in the series. Let's get on with the questing of those dragons!

RESIDENCE EVIL - OSAKA CREATES HUGE BIOHAZARD!







The GR staff hasn't decided if this looks more like a fun theme-park attraction, a bad carnival house, or an American discount shopping warehouse. It's a long flight just to find out...

From July 18, 1998 to July 17, 1999, residents of Japan will be able to experience the horror...

...of *Biohazard* for real at the Expo-Land in Osaka. The 15-minute attraction re-creates some of the scenes in the game as you walk about the house, go through the garden, then into the laboratory. The huge building actually has two stories so that you go up and down stairs as well. Most of the monsters (like the dog, snake, etc.) are robots, but the zombies are all played by real people. The place is full of doors, and without warning, the zombies will burst out and shamble towards you. They also follow you and try to touch you. It's very dark and very scary. Several women came out crying. People waiting outside can see the opening movie and scenes from the game played on a TV monitor. People had to wait hours to get in. At the end is a special *Biohazard* goods shop which also sells exclusive goods only available at this event.



Of course, they're always looking to sell us something. And of course, we're always ready to buy...



DUAL HAZARD, DUAL SHOCK...

Biohazard fanatics in Japan are certainly spoiled, as Capcom have just released dual shock versions of *Biohazard* and *Biohazard 2*. But the enhancements transcend mere analog pad and dual shock support. *Biohazard DS* includes original orchestrated music and comes with a second disc that contains all kinds of goodies – particularly movie sequences from the original *BH2* prototype, before it was scrapped and taken back to the drawing board. Remember all of the early scenes printed in various publications that never made the final game? You can now see them in action! *Biohazard 2 DS* comes with an extra game called *Extreme Battle* that has you fight your way back to the police station to collect four bombs and save all of humanity. Cool stuff.





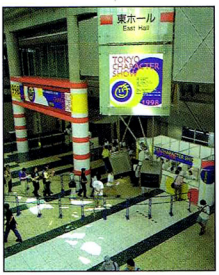
MERCHANDISING MAYHEM IN TOKYO!

The Tokyo Character Show was held on October 2nd and 3rd at the Tokyo Big Site...

...in Tokyo. Character merchandising is now a major business in Japan, with comic, anime and game characters more popular than ever. As such, they now have their own dedicated show. Main exhibitors included Sega, Square, Konami, Namco and Capcom who had a massive range of gaming goods - in particular, a large number of exclusive limited edition goods, including signed framed pictures of *FFVIII* characters. The prices of the 8000 items on sale went from ¥100 to over ¥30,000 (if you wanted a *Biohazard* revolver, rare *FFVIII* goods or a Judo kit signed by Mr. Segata Sanshiro!). Over 30,000 people packed out the very successful two day event.



Look! Guns! Ooooo...Oh, sorry. We thought we were at an NRA presentation of new weapons...





TOKYO GAME SHOW

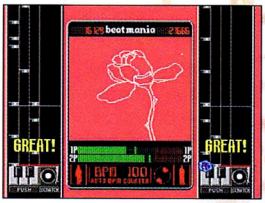
Date: October 9-11
Place: Makuhari Messe Exhibition Center in Chiba.

There will be 89 companies there with a special Kids and PC corner as last time. This time all the game goods shops have been gathered together, so six of the eight halls will be just for games only. We've seen the floorplans and can say that SEGA have the largest booth, with a massive amount of space around it. SCE, Capcom, Namco, Square, Konami, Bandai, SNK and Taito have the next largest booth size. Despite rumors, Nintendo will definitely not be at the show. The main attractions will be Sega's Dreamcast lineup, SNK's Neo Geo Pocket and Square's *FFVIII*.



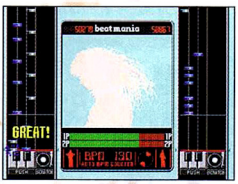
TEAR UP DA WAX ON PS!

Konami's custom beat box will get the funk out of Japanese gamers this fall. Let's go new beat!



Aww yeeah booy! It's time to get amplified and let your backbone slide! *Beatmania 2nd Mix,* based on the popular arcade game, is coming to the PS September 24, along with the cool Scratch Pad controller you see to the right. The PS version will have all 19 mixes from the arcade, including Ska, Hip Hop, Break Beat, Techno, Ambient, Drum and Bass, Reggae, Soul, and special mixes such as Konamix and Love So Groovy (!). The object of the game, for all you DJs in training, is to clear each stage with the best mix. You'll have to monitor typical DJ stuff like Beats Per Minute (BPM) and rhythm patterns while maintaining a balanced Groovy Gauge. The Scratch Pad, exclusively manufactured by Ascii, is an exact miniature replica of the arcade's control set-up, complete with a circular turntable, large buttons to synchronize keyboard sounds, and various modes. Konami is considering adding some straight-up dope new modes as well, and eight all-new original songs for the fly-ass PS version.







WIPE ALL YOUR WORRIES AWAY!

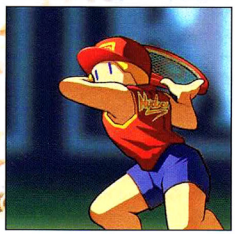
Don't you hate it when you sit down to play your favorite PS or Saturn CD game, only to wait while the machine tries and tries to read an old, scratched-up disk? That's a perennial annoyance at the *GR* offices, but this simple product has saved our bacon in many a late-night deadline grab-fest. Using it couldn't be simpler: just find the scratch on the disk, apply a drop of the liquid, and buff it, using the included rag (or your own personal favorite) until the scratch is gone. Then get back to the important things in life: playing games.

Learn more about WipeOut! at: http://www.cdrepair.com.



POLY-TENNIS? SMASHING!

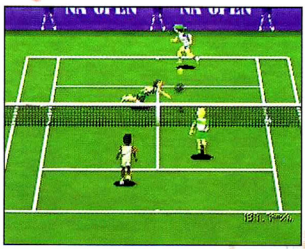
In early October, Hudson of Japan will release Let's Smash, which oddly enough is a new tennis game...

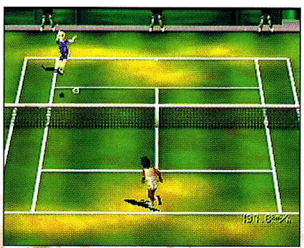




...for Nintendo 64. Every aspect of the game, from the engine to the characters, is fully polygonal, making for a rather nice looking title. The game features 24 individual tennis characters that are neither realistic nor super-deformed, but as per usual a select few are nonselectable from the initial lineup. Eight hidden characters become playable as you progress and win the different tournaments throughout the game. By way of the analog stick, you control the racket movement and ball control, allowing for extremely precise serves and shots to take place. Play modes include exhibition, tournament and challenge. In exhibition, you can choose either single or doubles, where as in tournament, you will enter four major competitions held in Australia, America, France, and England. Also, by entering the tournament mode, you will be listed on a unique world-ranking chart. The challenge mode will allow you to customize various aspects of your characters, including clothing, shirts, and shoes, so as to coordinate your own tennis fashions depending on your taste. Look for an update in *GR* very soon.







TERRIBLE LIZARDS...

Although the new Godzilla movie wasn't much of a success, Godzilla fever...

...is still spreading across Japan. Because of this, during October at the Takashimaya department store in Osaka, a special Godzilla exhibition event was held with real models, videos of movies and pictures from all the *Godzilla* movies. One section had a giant panorama with huge 2-meter- tall moving robots of all the Godzilla monsters, and you could pretend to shoot them with lasers, etc. As always, a massive Godzilla goods store was waiting for you at the end with plenty of traditional models and kits along with some limited edition items for the serious collector.





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CRASH LANDING IN A STORE NEAR YOU!

Action figures aren't just for kids anymore. Resaurus prepares to unleash Crash, Quake, Virus, Speed Racer...

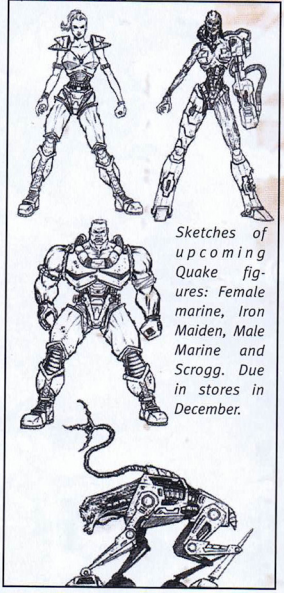
...and more Duke! Video game super stars continue to seep into the massive toy market. *Tomb Raider, Street Fighter,* and *Resident Evil* were only the beginning. Coming your way from ReSaurus Company Inc. , here's a first peek at the new *Crash, Quake,* and *Duke* series II figures.

Crash Bandicoot series



We are family... Just look at all these wonderful Crash Toys! To be sold separately: Coco Bandicoot, Jet Board Crash, Jet Pack Crash, Komodo Moe, Tiny, Dr. Neo Cortex and assorted goodies. Look for 'em in October.

Quake series



Sketches of upcoming Quake figures: Female marine, Iron Maiden, Male Marine and Scrogg. Due in stores in December.

Duke Nukem series



And here's a group of toys that'll make mom proud...the new detailed Duke figure and assorted baddies will probably try to kick your other figures' asses when you leave the room.

PRAISE BE! MESSIAH TO BE FIRST VIDEO GAME RECORDED IN 6-CHANNEL DTS!

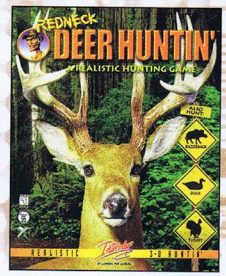
Tommy Tallarico has informed us that his upcoming *Messiah* soundtrack will be recorded in DTS! Beyond Dolby Digital , DDS or Ac3, DTS is recorded on 6 separate channels, unlike Dolby, which spreads out over 2. *Jurassic Park 2* was the first movie recorded in DTS. Tommy is also recording the Sega Dreamcast boot-up jingle! All totalled, Tommy T. is working on 23 projects, hosting a TV show (*Electric Playground*) and building a space station. Ok, he's not building a space station. At least I don't think he is.



HUNT FOR A REAL GAME...

When software developers smell blood, they come a runnin... it ain't right...

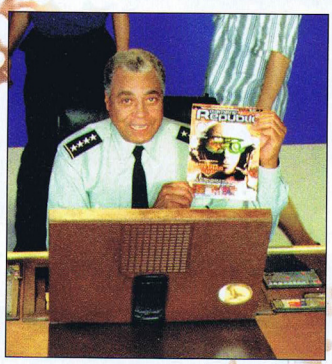
...Ok, so a hunting game sold well. That just proves that there are still a lot of sick %&$# out there with 30 bucks. Shooting imaginary baddies is one thing and makin' fun a them there rednecks may be a hoot, but to even begin to condone this crap is in our opinion way out of line, whether it's in fun or not. How sick.



TIBERIAN MIND TRICK?

As featured last month in GR, Command & Conquer 2: Tiberian Sun is to feature...

...two major film stars in the shape of James Earl Jones and Michael Biehn. Both stars are currently filming the cut-scenes for what is likely to be this years biggest RTS game. GR was lucky enough to get Mr. Earl Jones to take a few precious minutes to look at the mag. Afterwards he could be heard uttering the words, "It is too late for other mags, my son..."



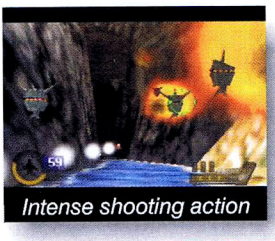
MICHEAL JACKSON NEWS SHOCKER!! THE EXCITABLE KING OF POP'S LEGITIMATE ATTEMPT TO ATTRACT CHILDREN... BUT ONLY IN JAPAN!

Michael Jackson has entered a strange and surreal new venture by setting up a corporation called Michael Jackson Japan, Inc. At a press conference held on July 27, the blueprint of a huge Jacko-influenced theme park was revealed. The company will also engage in the management of a toy store chain. When it comes to the actual theme park construction, Jacko illustrated his ideas with such enthusiasm that he had to take off his sun glasses because they became clouded up with his own steam. He also said that he would be working on every aspect of the construction of the theme park. Where the construction site will be and when the construction starts has not yet been determined. Yes, someday soon, we'll all be able to ride Jacko's Tilt-a-Whirl.

JUST PLAIN FUN!

www.JustPlainFun.net




Intense shooting action


In-game cinema sequences



Gigantic animated bosses

KNIFE EDGE: *Nose Gunner*

Blast off for revolutionary game play action with KEMCO® Knife Edge: Nose Gunner™ for Nintendo 64! Knife Edge combines the fast-paced action of a sci-fi shoot-em-up with the thrilling joyride of an arcade-style flight game. Beautiful 3D polygon-constructed extraterrestrial environments fill the screen. The pioneer colonies on Mars are invaded and you have to shoot your way through enemy craft and ground defense placements. KEMCO's innovative game pass generation system computes the player's choice of assault craft, navigator character, difficulty level, and enemy kill ratio to open up new branches and routes through the hostile environments and introduce new enemy attack configurations. Knife Edge offers a new game play experience every time.

Coming Soon On N64:

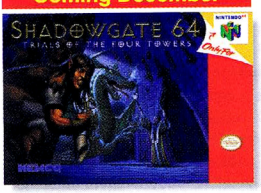
Coming October



Coming November



Coming December



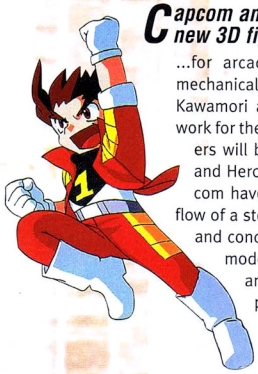
KEMCO

NINTENDO 64

Exclusively Distributed By:
Microware Distributing, Inc.

CAPCOM ROMANCE THE ARCADES...

Capcom announced that they will release a new 3D fighter called Tech Romancer...



...for arcades sometime this fall. Eight different mechanical warriors will be on hand, all created by Mr. Kawamori and Studio Nue, most famous for design work for the super popular anime series *Macross*. Players will be able to enjoy two modes of play: Story and Hero Challenge mode. In the Story mode, Capcom have adopted a multi-story system where the flow of a story can change depending on the situation and conditions during the game. In Hero Challenge mode, you will be fighting against 12 opponents and be ranked depending on how well you play. Capcom also hinted that they will release the game for an unnamed console at some time in the future.







Artwork © Capcom. 1998.

FAMILY JEWELS?

This rather rude Japanese ad for Treasure ESP features a little figure...

...with a head shaped like the *Radiant Silvergun* ship, not to mention a large crystalline John Thomas. Apparently the young chap in question is debating which game to play, either *Silhouette Mirage* or the aforementioned *Radiant Silvergun*. The ad implies that he wants to play with the games all night but he's not telling which one. It seems to *GR* as though he may actually have something else on his mind instead!



SPACE... THE FINAL FARM?

There are numerous character-raising games in which players have to rear race horses, bring up cute girls...

...or nurse robots. Now, Enix will throw their proverbial hat into the ring with an interesting title called *ASTRONoKA*. The game was created by Muu Muu, known for their game titles such as *UgoUgoRuga*, *Gambara Morikawa-kun 2* and in this country, *Jumping Flash 1 & 2*.





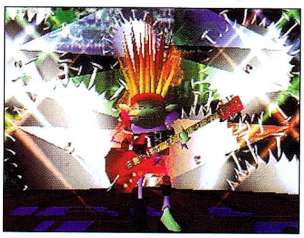
The story is as follows: One day, you land on a desolate and remote planet to make your living by growing cosmo vegetables. You not only become just a farmer but are creative enough to enter a space vegetable contest by cross-breeding different kinds of species. In other words, your mission is to become the number one farmer in space vegetables.

However, this game is not just for growing new vegetables. At the same time, you have to protect your crops from vermin called Baboo. Although Baboo do not look intimidating, they are troublesome; they will try to destroy your crops. To make your harvest successful, you fend them off by purchasing traps and setting them up. However, Baboos can learn from their mistakes, so you have to constantly re-think how you can trap them to make your harvest successful. Sounds nice and weird.

POP CHIPS' CLIPS!

Have you ever thought while watching MTV or VH1 that you could do a better job...

...than those hack directors? Here is your chance. In *Great Hits* you play as Pop Chips, a rookie video clipper with Harmony Major Label. One day, the entire staff at Harmony Major Label falls ill from food poisoning and it's up to you to create the video clips.





For each of the game's scenarios, you have to fulfill two requirements: one is to solve a problem and the other is to create a video clip. At the beginning of each scenario, you will be presented with elements that you must use in your video clip. For example, you may be required to fade in or fade or to use a bright light. After creating your clip, you bring it to the agency. Then all you have to do is to kick back and wait for the results on the hit chart.

By creating your own clips, you will receive points in three categories: money, fame, and your number of fans. Of course, those points depend on how well your video clip does. If you create a hit, money increases and you can get nicer equipment. If you continue creating top-ten clips, then you will become more famous. The more popular you become, the easier your clips enter the top-ten chart and the more fans you have. If you don't get lots of fans, don't worry. There are people who do not like top-ten music. They are small in number but they will fanatically support your video clips, just like in the indie music scene. Sounds realistic, huh? It's coming in the fall from Enix.

THE ULTIMATE MAN-MADE CREATION
HAS BECOME THE ULTIMATE GENOCIDE MACHINE
AND ONLY ONE FORCE CAN STEM THE DEADLY TIDE

THUNDERFORCE V

Perfect System

WIN $10,000*

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WORKING DESIGNS

PlayStation

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

* Full details can be obtained at our web site at http://www.workingdesigns.com, or by sending a SASE to: ThunderForce V Contest c/o SPAZ, 18135 Clear Creek Road, Redding, CA 96001. Complete details are also available inside every game package.

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SPICY EURO PLAY PAL!

It would appear that the numbers are in for Sony's Playstation PAL territories sales...



...and the little gray box is doing rather well. Over 10 million units have been shifted in total with the following breakdown: 2.5million in the UK, 1.75 million in France and Germany, with the rest being made up of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Not bad, eh? Pity that the PAL system still suffers from nasty black borders and slightly slower speed. At least Europe was the first to get the Spice Girls game...

RARE HEROES 2

Rare are proving once again that they are serious contenders for best developer...



...in Europe, as *Banjo-Kazooie* shot straight to the top of the UK charts after its release. The honey bear and red-breasted breegull spanked down the other top games of the moment, which included *Colin McRae Rally* and *Premier Manager 98*, proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Nintendo 64 still has mass appeal and a loyal following to boot.

DREAMCAST DWARVEN FREAKS AND NO MODEM!

Dreamcast news from Europe comes shooting straight from the hip! Sega Europe are rumored...

...to have a *Mario 64*-style game in development. According to our saucy sources, the main hero of the game is a strange little dwarven jungle explorer. Oh yeah, and he smokes a big pipe as well. Sounds like Sega Europe are off to a rather strange start with their in-house development... if the game even exists, that is. The environments are supposed to be pleasant enough, including cool waterfalls with attractive particle effects. Trees and plants are to have individual leaves that quite literally fall to the ground(effects not seen since *Forbidden Forest* on the C64). It sounds a little bit too exciting to us, and could possibly be just a demo, or, perhaps, a launch title over here! Dwarven Pipe Smokers? Only on Dreamcast!

More Euro-tastic Sega news comes in the form of a rather solemn piece of information...

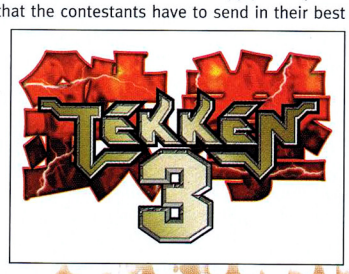
...for our gaming cousins across the pond. It is more than likely that the European Dreamcast machine will not be released with the all important modem accessory. Although not yet confirmed, comments from Mark Maslowicz and Mark Hartley of Sega Europe have suggested the unimportance of this peripheral in the European market. Apparently, in order to ensure that the Dreamcast reaches a mass gaming market, the inclusion of the modem is not necessary. Of course, not all Europeans benefit from free local phone calls, so that is probably a more realistic argument, but then again, shouldn't these gamers at least be given a choice?



IRON FISTING IN THE UK

It looks as though Tekken 3 fever has become a worldwide phenomenon...

...as Sony hold a Pan-European tournament running from mid September until the end of November. The same rules apply as in previous competitions, in that the contestants have to send in their best times on Survival mode and then the best times go through to stand a chance of winning a full size *Tekken3* arcade machine. Not bad if you can get over the number of "sausages" lining up to beat you down...



LONDON CALLING...

London is beginning to buzz as the ECTS (European Computer Trade Show) primes for opening...



...on September 6-8, but more exciting than that was the rumored news that a certain Mr. Shigeru Miyamoto and Mr. Minoru Arakawa of the big 'N' are going to show up. Well, we can only speculate as to what their presence may mean, but it is more than likely that *Zelda* will be the big topic of conversation... we'll let you know next issue.

DEAD IN THE WATER™

LIVE FAST . . . DIE WET

"I WILL destroy you in the Battle mode ....
I WILL destroy you in the two player split screen mode...
I WILL destroy you in the combat cable link mode ....
I WILL DESTROY YOU MAGGOT !"
-SGT.Steel

"Look here Son, I WILL use your head as an anchor and your butt as a seat cushion"
-Officer J.B.Nightstick

"When the flag goes down baby your gonna feel the funk of my Disco Fever Ray , You'll be hearin' "Stayin' Alive" til' ya die"
-Ebony Justice

"I will continually upgrade my sinister hearse boat and weapons to extreme necropotent porportions and your weak pale flesh will ROT IN PIECES"
-Dr.Graves









- 13 'Off the Hook' characters to choose from.
- 9 Blazin' aquatic tracks to tear up.
- 3D rendered waves like you've never seen before.
- An arsenal of high powered, high tech customizable weapons and boats- all fully upgradeable.
- Two player split screen or combat cable link.

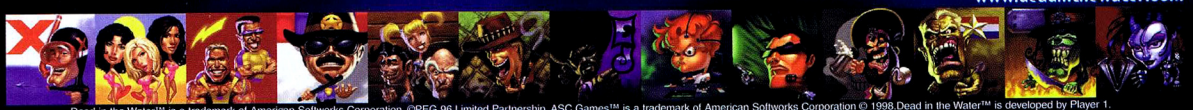
PLAYER 1

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation

ASC GAMES™

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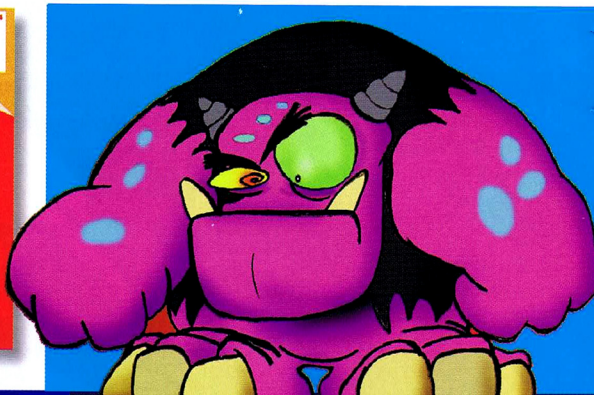
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CHARLIE BLASTS











NINTENDO64

KEMCO

Get ready to RUMBLE! Charlie Blast's Territory will blow your mind! In Single Player Puzzle mode, help Demolition Expert Charlie Blast strategically re-arrange Bombs, Detonators, TNT crates, Blockers and other Objects scattered on each uniquely designed island puzzle level. Use the Trampolines, Floating Platforms and Conveyor Belts on each stage to help Charlie solve the puzzles. Detonate the explosives to set off a chain reaction that will blast the island to pieces and clear the level. Continue clearing Single Player Puzzle levels and Charlie Blast's Territory will reveal diabolical hidden Multi Player game boards, where two to four players can blast away at each other to gain territory on specially designed stages. Players can choose from four fun characters with their own individual quirky personalities. Acquire area on the Multi Player game board by arranging the Bombs and other assorted objects (such as Freeze Bombs that temporarily immobilize your opponents) to create an explosive chain reaction. There are 60 Single Player puzzle-solving fun and simultaneous Multi- Player competitive action.

CHARLIE BLASTS Sweepstakes!



Enter the Charlie Blasts Sweepstakes for a Chance to Win a Trip to Nevada!

Grand Prize trip includes (for a family of four): Round trip air transportation; hotel accommodations for 5 days and 4 nights at the world renowned Treasure Island Resort where there is a Volcano eruption every 90 minutes; a Lake Mead Cruise on the Desert Princess, where guests will be treated to an "outrageously great time" and the Hoover Dam "Hard Hat Tour," which requires participants to wear hard hats like the hero of Charlie Blasts Territory. This special tour will visit the areas of the dam that are not part of the standard tour - areas like the generator shaft gallery, the needle valve house, the seepage gallery and other "behind the scene" areas. Sweepstakes is open to legal residents of the U.S. and Canada (excluding Quebec), 18 years of age and older. Void in FL and where prohibited. No purchase necessary.

To enter the sweepstakes online, visit our website at http://www.JustPlainFun.net from September 1, 1998 thru December 31, 1998. Online entries must be submitted by December 31, 1998. To enter by mail, print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number and email address (if any) on a 3"x5" piece of paper, insert into an envelope, and mail to: Charlie Blasts Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 4080, Grand Rapids, MN 55730-4080. Write in entries must be postmarked by December 31, 1998 and received by January 5, 1999. For a copy of the full official rules, mail a self-addressed stamped envelope to Charlie Blasts Sweepstakes Rules Request, P.O. Box 649, Sayreville, NJ 08871-0649. WA and VT residents may omit return postage.

database

YOUR NUMBER ONE SOURCE FOR TOP SELLING CONSOLE AND COMPUTER GAME STATS



NPD

top ten best selling playstation titles

RANKED ON U.S. UNITS SOLD JUNE 1998



1 GRAN TURISMO RACING SONY
2 TEKKEN 3 NAMCO
3 ROAD RASH 3D ELECTRONIC ARTS
4 MORTAL KOMBAT 4 MIDWAY
5 VIGILANTE 8 ACTIVISION
6 McGRATH SUPERCROSS '98 ACCLAIM
7 MLB '99 SONY
8 NEED FOR SPEED III EA
9 TRIPLE PLAY '99 EA
10 TOMB RAIDER EIDOS

Driving fans ruled the list this month, but Tekken 3 is still going strong in the number two spot. A lower-priced classic rounds up the PS chart.

top ten best selling nintendo64 titles

RANKED ON UNITS SOLD JUNE 1998

1 MLB KEN GRIFFEY JR. NINTENDO
2 BANJO-KAZOOKIE NINTENDO
3 ALL STAR BASEBALL '99 ACCLAIM
4 GOLDENEYE 007 NINTENDO
5 QUEST 64 THQ
6 1080 SNOWBOARDING NINTENDO
7 MORTAL KOMBAT 4 MIDWAY
8 YOSHI'S STORY NINTENDO
9 SUPER MARIO 64 NINTENDO
10 MARIO KART 64 NINTENDO



Several new N64 titles were released this month, and as the charts show, all of them were very anticipated - especially the much delayed Griffey.

top ten best selling saturn titles

RANKED ON UNITS SOLD JUNE 1998



1 BURNING RANGERS SEGA
2 PANZER SAGA SEGA
3 PANZER DRAGOON SEGA
4 NBA LIVE '98 EA
5 NASCAR '98 EA
6 ST FIGHTER THE MOVIE CAPCOM
7 HOUSE OF THE DEAD SEGA
8 SONIC 3D BLAST SEGA
9 FIFA: RTWC '98 EA
10 BUST A MOVE 2 ACCLAIM

One of the last major Saturn games makes its appearence as the top game this month, but an incredible RPG is right on its heels.

top ten best selling pc titles

RANKED ON UNITS SOLD JUNE 1998

1 STARCRAFT BLIZZARD
2 UNREAL MMX GT INTERACTIVE
3 DEER HUNTER WIZARDWORKS
4 BIG GAME HUNTER HEAD GAMES
5 X-FILES FOX
6 TROPHY HUNTER WIZARDWORKS
7 FINAL FANTASY VII EIDOS
8 MYST BRODERBUND
9 TITANIC CYBERFLIX
10 DUKE NUKEM 3D FORMGEN



This month Starcraft once again holds the top spot, defending it against both Unreal and a batch of strangely formidable hunting games...



top ten overall console

FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 1998

1 GRAN TURISMO-ps SONY
2 KEN GRIFFEY JR.-n64 NINTENDO
3 BANJO KAZOOIE-n64 NINTENDO
4 ALL STAR BASEBALL '99-n64 ACCLAIM
5 TEKKEN 3-ps NAMCO
6 GOLDENEYE 007-n64 NINTENDO
7 QUEST 64-n64 THQ
8 ROAD RASH 3D-ps EA
9 1080 SNOWBOARDING-n64 NINTENDO
10 MORTAL KOMBAT 4-ps MIDWAY

world republic top ten games

japan

1	BRAVE FENCER	PS
2	PRO BASEBALL '98	PS
3	XI	PS
4	DEKOTORA LEGEND	PS
5	WORLD SOCCER 3	PS
6	DOUBLE CAST	PS
7	KISETSU WO DAKISHIMETE	PS
8	LUNAR 2	SS
9	MONSTER CAPSULE	PS
10	KAGERO	PS

[RANKED ON UNITS SOLD JULY 1998]

united kingdom

1	PREMIER MANAGER '98	PS
2	COLIN McRAE RALLY	PS
3	WORLD CUP '98	PS
4	GRAN TURISMO	PS
5	THREE LIONS	PS
6	TOMB RAIDER	PS
7	SPICE WORLD	PS
8	COMMANDOS	PC
9	HEART OF DARKNESS	PS
10	RESIDENT EVIL 2	PS

[RANKED ON UNITS SOLD JULY 1998]

gamers' republic top ten games

FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST 1998

d. halverson



1	SPYRO	PS
2	WILD 9	PS
3	CRASH 3	PS
4	BRAVE FENCER	PS
5	RAKUGA KIDS	N64
6	TOMBA	PS
7	RADIANT SILVERGUN	SS
8	FF VIII DEMO	PS
9	PENNY RACERS	N64
10	SHINING WISDOM	SS

d. hodgson



1	METAL GEAR SOLID	PS
2	SOUL CALIBUR	ARCADE
3	FF VIII DEMO	PS
4	SIN DEMO	PC
5	CYBERNATOR	SNES
6	CRASH 3	PS
7	EHRGEIZ DEMO	PS
8	RIVAL SCHOOLS	PS
9	HALF-LIFE	PC
10	QUAKE 2	PC

b. siechter



1	TOMBA!	PS
2	PANZER SAGA	SS
3	TALES OF DESTINY	PS
4	SPYRO	PS
5	FUTURE COP	PS
6	CRASH 3	PS
7	KARTIA	PS
8	WILD 9	PS
9	RADIANT SILVERGUN	SS
10	POY POY 2	PS

d. rees



1	FF VIII DEMO	PS
2	SPYRO	PS
3	CRASH 3	PS
4	SIN DEMO	PC
5	HALF-LIFE	PC
6	GAMEDAY '99	PS
7	NFS III	PS
8	DECEPTION 2	PS
9	VMS GODZILLA	DC
10	BLOOD 2	PC

m. hobbs



1	RADIANT SILVERGUN	SS
2	F-ZERO X	N64
3	CRASH 3	PS
4	TOMBA!	PS
5	SIN DEMO	PC
6	RAKUGA KIDS	N64
7	THUNDERFORCE V	PS
8	G-DARIUS	PS
9	POCKET FIGHTER	SS
10	RED ALARM	VB

m. grissin



1	RADIANT SILVERGUN	SS
2	SHINING FORCE III 2	SS
3	RIVAL SCHOOLS	PS
4	SIN DEMO	PC
5	F-ZERO X	N64
6	GUN BARL	PS
7	RAKUGA KIDS	N64
8	WACHENROEDER	SS
9	TENCHU	PS
10	MADDEN 64	N64

r. locklhart



1	STAR OCEAN: SS	PS
2	LUNAR 2	SS
3	STARCRAFT	PC
4	BRAVE FENCER	PS
5	FF VIII DEMO	PS
6	OVERBLOOD 2	PS
7	RADIANT SILVERGUN	SS
8	DEEP FEAR	SS
9	VMS GODZILLA	DC
10	SIN DEMO	PC

b. willams



1	RIVAL SCHOOLS	PS
2	SF COLLECTION	SS
3	M. NINJA 64	N64
4	DEMON'S BLAZON	SFAMI
5	HALF-LIFE	PC
6	GUN BARL	PS
7	R&R RACING	SNES
8	F-ZERO X	N64
9	BANJO-KAZOOIE	N64
10	RADIANT SILVERGUN	SS

TECHFRONT

It is time to break out your slide rules and scientific calculators as we delve further into both practical and theoretical methods for rendering your virtual worlds.

BY BRIAN OSSERMAN

THE WORLD BEYOND POLYGONS

LOOK AT ME RENDER!

The title refers not to the world outside your living room, but rather to the multitude of rendering techniques that are not based on the standard texture-mapped polygon model, and which have been all but ignored in previous columns. Although only a handful of today's games use anything other than the standard texture-mapping model, VM Labs is touting the flexibility of its (codenamed) Project X in allowing a variety of different graphics techniques, and Sony has hinted at an attempt to move away from reliance on polygons for the Playstation 2. Don't look for a revolution overnight, but some technology demos are already around, and you can expect to see at least some games appearing using some of these techniques within the next couple years. Accordingly, here is a brief discussion of some of the more commonly-discussed techniques.

PARTICLE SYSTEM RENDERING

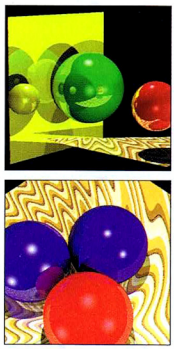
One model that is very different from polygon-based models, but rather easy to combine with them, is particle system rendering. Instead of modeling all objects in terms of polygonal outer surfaces that move in rigid ways, particle systems are, as one might guess, made up of a bunch of small particles sitting in space. Each particle is typically extremely simple to draw, and the final appearance is determined mainly by where they are in relation to one another. Since each particle can be placed independently of others, particle systems are useful for attempting to draw formless and very dynamic substances like smoke or fire. Particle systems also benefit from a key similarity to polygon systems: objects are still drawn one at a time, starting from some sort of model in 3D. This allows easy combination of particle systems with polygon-based systems, so that developers can take advantage of the strengths of both systems without too much trouble.



Quake 2 uses particle systems for rocket trails and explosions

RAY TRACING

In contrast, ray tracing takes a completely different approach to drawing objects. Instead of drawing one object at a time as with the standard polygonal systems, it draws one pixel at a time, calculating the color at each pixel via a complex recursive method. To see how it works, first consider a simpler method called ray casting: to figure out a pixel color, first figure out which object is visible in that direction (this involves going through all the objects that are in that direction and figuring out which is closest); then, determine the color by combining information on that object's color, and how light from the different light sources is hitting it. This is already complicated enough, since each pixel involves going through all the objects that might be visible, figuring out which part of which one actually is, and then doing what is typically a fairly complicated lighting calculation.



simple raytraced scenes by Razvan Surdulescu

Ray tracing makes the entire process more complicated by adding reflections into the bargain: after figuring out the color of an object, you then see if it's reflecting another object, and if so, what the color of that object is. This is done by casting another ray from the perspective on the first object in the direction that light would bounce. Of course, the second object may be reflecting a third object, and so forth. This can go on indefinitely, but in practice one normally fixes a set number of times to repeat the process for a given pixel. All of this adds up to a large number of calculations per pixel, but the results are gratifying: both specular and diffuse lighting are modeled fairly accurately, and objects are no longer restricted to polygonal shapes. Simple real-time ray tracing may no longer be out of the question for games that have fairly simple graphics, perhaps along the lines of *Tetrisphere*.

IMAGE-BASED RENDERING

For yet another completely different model, there is an approach known as image-based rendering that has been largely restricted to academia, but which may may well end up providing a fast, substantially different alternative to texture-mapped polygons. The basic idea is that instead of starting with 3D models and attempting to simulate a camera, you start with 2D images, and attempt to use some additional information to warp them as if the viewer were moving around in the scene. So far, this is fairly easy to put into practice, and has the tremendous advantage that, since no geometric models are involved, it is perfectly feasible to work with a photo-realistic scene of arbitrary complexity. However, a problem arises when the viewer moves in a way that should reveal a piece of the scene not previously visible: a hole appears in the picture. One generally attempts to use a number of images from different angles so that each part of the scene is visible in at least one image, but complex scenes would require a large number of different images to work from, so a substantial part of the advantage of the image-based approach is lost. However, people have been experimenting with a wide variety of approaches to implementing image-based rendering, and it seems to offer the best possibility of drastically redefining what we expect from computer graphics.

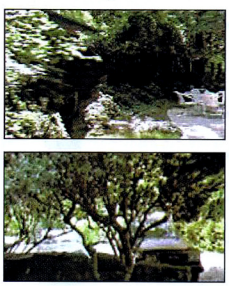


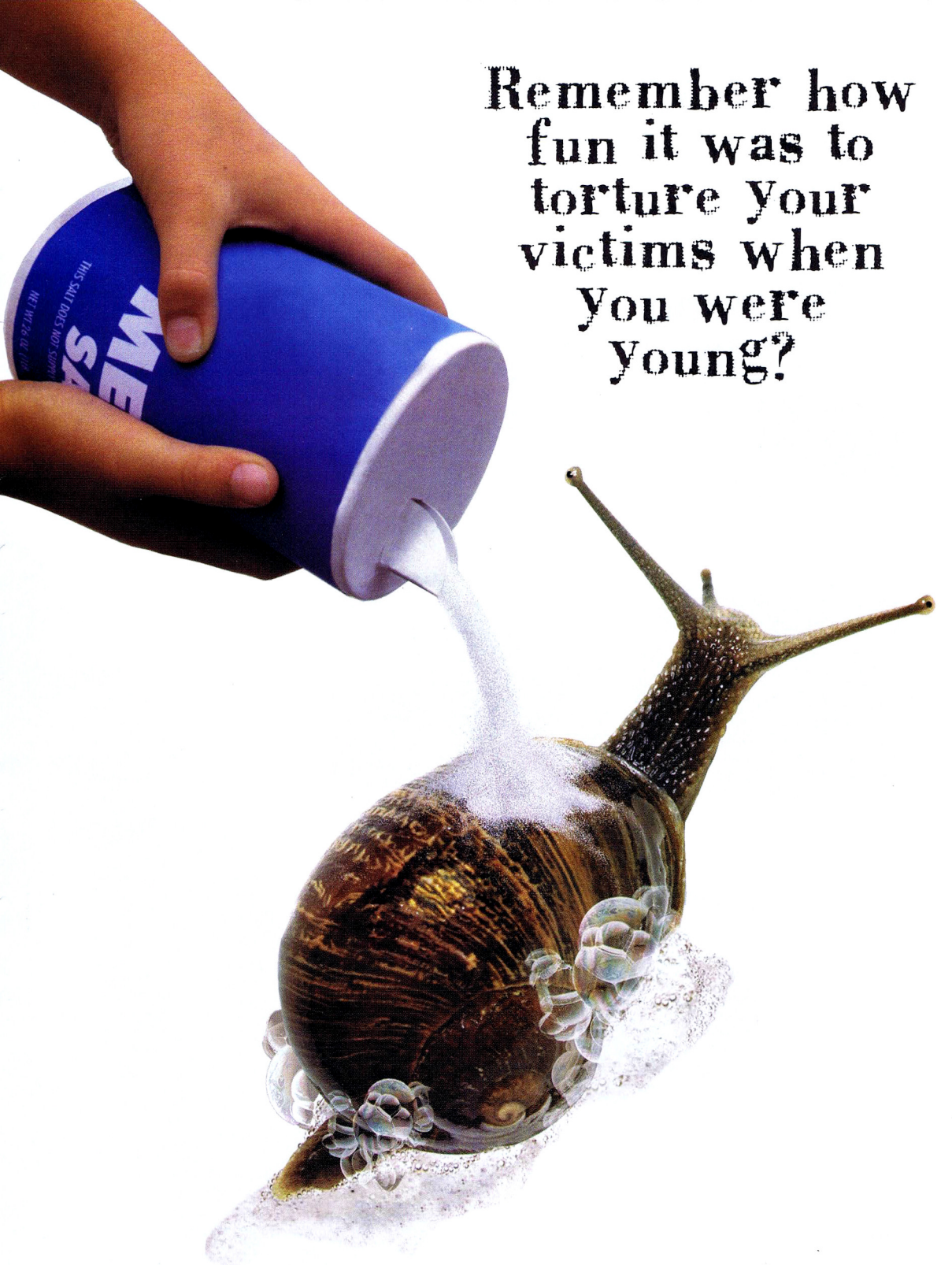
image-based scenes by Leonard McMillan

THE FINAL WORD—FOR NOW

Look for more on alternatives to texture-mapped polygons next month.

In the mean time, if you have any comments, questions, or suggestions for topics you'd like to see covered, you can email techfront@gamersrepublic.com.

Brian Osserman is a third year student at Harvard University studying mathematics and computer science, and has been playing video games and programming for as long as he can remember, starting with Logo on an Atari 800 in 1st grade.


Remember how fun it was to torture your victims when You were young?

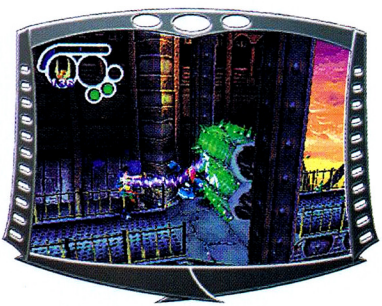
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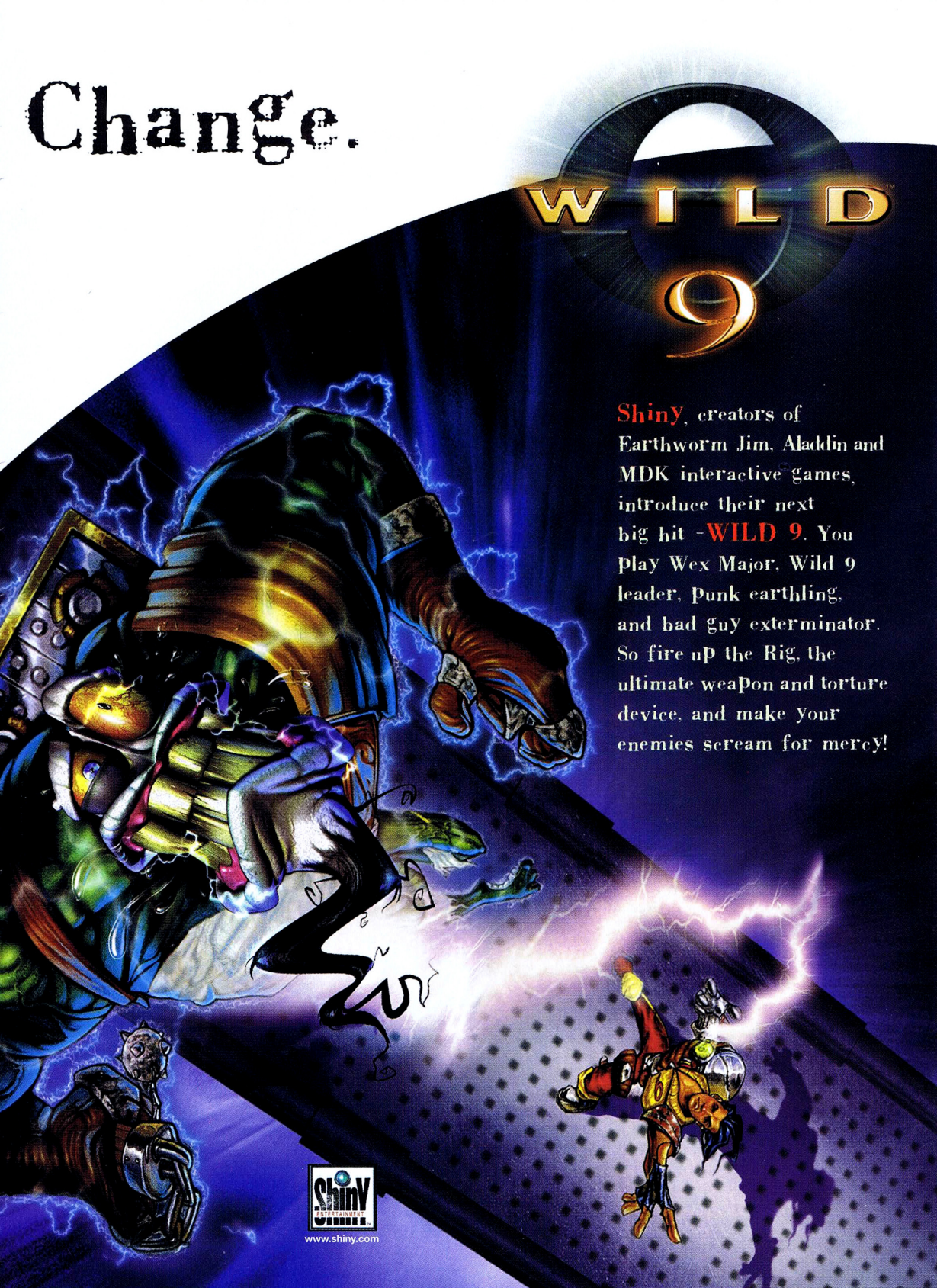
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TEEN
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Change.



Shiny, creators of Earthworm Jim, Aladdin and MDK interactive games, introduce their next big hit -WILD 9. You play Wex Major, Wild 9 leader, punk earthling, and bad guy exterminator. So fire up the Rig, the ultimate weapon and torture device, and make your enemies scream for mercy!

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MILLENNIUM PUBLICATIONS INC

Wild 9

By Dave Halverson

A sterling adventure for the weary platformer...

I pretty much live for platform games. 3D, 2D, 2.5D - it doesn't matter. If there are intricate timing maneuvers, lush visuals, great music, an inspired storyline and an interesting cast of characters involved, I'm behind the controller. Shiny make predominantly these types of games. They know where their strengths lie, and so, instead of pumping out sequels (well, I actually wish they would start pumping out a few) or branching out into unfamiliar territory, they continually strive to break new ground, doing what they do best. Earthworm Jim, Earthworm Jim 2, and MDK were all "A" titles and with Shiny's first thoroughbred PlayStation game, Wild 9, the same will soon apply. It may have taken a couple years to get the 9's where they wanted it, but from my vantage point, this looks like a platforming adventure unlike any you have ever experienced - as promised.

A BRIEF Q&A WITH THE WILD 9'S LEAD DESIGNER TOM TANAKA



GR: How is Wild 9 unique in the genre?

TT: From a platformer standpoint, the Wild 9 allows you to do so many things to your enemies besides "blast them and move on." Maybe we fixated a little too much on this aspect of the game, but once you've slammed your first enemy to death or ground them into mulch, you giggle a little to yourself and want to do more. Each world not only satiates this need, but actually are necessities to progress further into the game. So if anyone feels really guilty about doing such terrible things to their enemies, they can honestly say, "It's not my fault, SHINY made me do it."

GR: What are you doing to make The Wild 9 a legendary Shiny title?

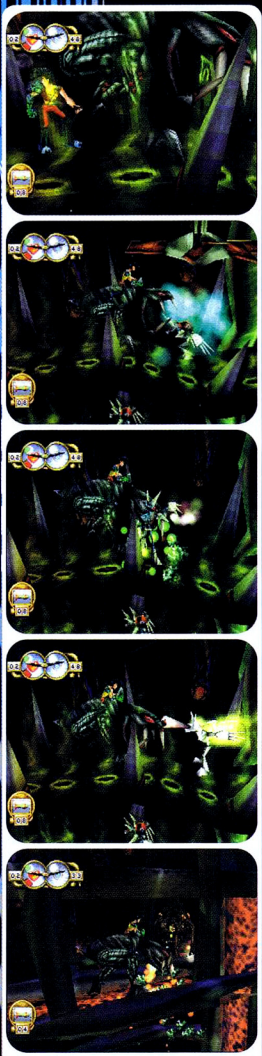
TT:The funny thing is we're sort of following the old *Earthworm Jim* pattern of level variety. Mixing it up a bit with flying and free-falling levels enough to give the player a well rounded experience.
Bits of humor were added here and there, but we couldn't help ourselves. It's inherent to whatever projects we do here.

GR: How did you come up with the original concept?

TT: David wanted to have a weapon that would respond to hand gestures originally. This involved an input device (GAUNTLET) and the actual weapon (THE RIG). Whatever the character pointed at, the weapon would blast. I evolved the main character WEX and teammates called the Wildos who were in a power struggle with the near omnipotent evil entity known as Karn. With the characters evolving, so to did the RIG and the actual functioning gameplay aspect of it. The RIG energy evolved from blasting things to actually being able to carry things and enemies, thus to a limited scope manipulating your environment. Kevin Munroe came onto the project from a TV animation background and took the characters and story to a whole new level. A project like this couldn't have been made without the superior effort made by the *Wild 9* team. I couldn't be prouder of the team I'm working with at present. Incredible artists like Lloyd Murphy, Erik Drageset, Jean-Michel Ringuet and Klaus Lyngeled. Great programming by Gavin James and Malachy Duffin. And, of course, designers like Rich Neves, Lori Perkins and Stuart Roch. The guys at BIG GRUB were also instrumental in getting the game done. John Alvarado, Mike Winfield, Ron Nakada, Brandon Humphreys and Neil Hong were true life savers.



This sign is simple enough to get by, Just grab an unexpecting foe and roast him in the neon! Of course Karn can't help but take this opportunity to send Wex a kind little message...



They don't call it the Beast Engine for nothing! Once you mount this utterly ferocious alien beast you can melt foes with its stinky breath or chew them up like cat chow. He also plays a key role in the level...

The main levels, sprawled out like huge polygonal erector sets, vary in form and function. Floating cities, dank quadrants of tangled architecture, murky swamps stagnant and alive, and utter brain melting infrastructures like the Beast Engine and Craterscape will have you staring at the screen in pure awe. Amongst these vertically and horizontally spanning (and often moving) settings, you often play across and into the screen as your path winds inwards deeper and deeper. The commotion going on in the background, which in most games you normally pass off as window dressing, is in *Wild 9* often your future destination. Littered with a twisted assortment of Karn's minions and specific hurdles, each level is unique and diverse unto itself.

Of course, none of this would matter all that much if all you were doing was jumping around from ledge to ledge shooting or beating up enemies along the way. This is where The Rig comes into play. As most of you already know, the Rig is used to pummel, maim, and torture prey. But there is much more to it than that. It's also used to carry or place objects, swing, and often times hold prey. *Wild 9* is a very situational game, as you can often handle a scenario or solve a problem in more than one way. I won't go as far as saying that this is like "the thinking mans platformer," but I will say that as much as it is packed with hard core timing and skill maneuvers, so is it with satire and cleverness.

Apart from the meaty inner sanctums of the *9's* lies a mixture of *EWJ* and *MDK*-like segues. Free-falling and Rocket bike-chase levels provide a unique amalgam of gameplay. Not so much as to stray from the formula, but just enough to bring a smile to your face between levels, as well as some ooohing and aahhing. And rightfully so; after some of the more treacherous frays, I felt like I'd been in a real fight. This is an intense game, made even more so by a thrilling and sometimes chilling Tommy Tallarico soundtrack. Tommy delivers his best BGM since the legendary *Skeleton Warriors*. From ambient to metal, the audio is up to the task, as are the befitting and plentiful sound effects.



BANGUS

CHARACTER PROFILES:



WEX Major

Wex Major is a normal teenager from the early 21st century. When his parents were selected for the mars research colony, he convinced them to let him join, mostly because he craved the adventure. Now stranded on The Andromeda cluster, Wex has got more adventure than he knows what to do with.

Wex's main personal asset is his charm, which he used in spades to get his parents to allow him to join them on their journey to Mars. That charisma serves him well as the leader of the Wild Nines; he's the glue that binds the team together, and keeps its various members from busting open each other's heads.



Boomer

Boomer is a spirited, brawling Highlander lass. She wants to free the cluster the old fashioned way... with her fists. Boomer is the sweetest person you'll ever meet. But her temper can rise in an instant. If crossed, she can go from zero to witch in a heartbreak. A word to the wise: don't mess with her. Ever.



Pilfer

Pilfer is the 9's resident psychopath. He's nuts - a walking catalog of manias and phobias. Totally minute, he can be a huddling agoraphobic, afraid to leave the confines of the Trawler, and, in the next instant, he's the Cluster's most disgruntled Postal Worker, going for some enemy's throat. There isn't anything wrong with Pilfer that a good frontal lobotomy couldn't cure.



B'angus

B'Angus, the pesky critter often perched on Wex's shoulder, is the person closest him - at least in physical proximity. B'Angus hates when people try to come between him and Wex. He's like that person who won't let others stand between them and the most powerful person in the room. Although he doesn't believe that Wex is necessarily The Great Champion, B'Angus is drawn by Wex's charisma. And, of course, to the protective shell he uses as a home in The Rig!



Henry the Aquatic Biped

Henry is at once the most and least human of the Wild 9's. He is a fluid creature, like the pseudopods in *The Abyss*, who can live in any liquid. His watery mass is encased within a squat, robotic shell, which waddles on stubby legs and projects camera probes on long tendrils.



Nitro

Seeking to destroy the Wild Nines, Karn forces his bio-engineers to create the most destructive being in all of The Andromeda Cluster. Poor Nitro is the result of this experiment. Encased within a protective suit, Nitro is sealed off from everything in his environment. Why? Because he is allergic to everything. Cat hair. Cotton wear. Cotton fibers. Cotton candy. Cantaloupes. Antelopes. Rainwater. Salt water. Salt water taffy. Moonlight. Sunlight. Gaslight. Neon. Freon. Whole milk. Low fat milk. Non Fat Milk. Raw vegetables. Cooked vegetables. And any food that starts with the letter "C" (except for chocolate). He's really really allergic to that! And all of this is just the tip of the iceberg! (But don't say that in front of Nitro... even mentioning ice gives him the sniffles!)



Vollstagg

Vollstagg (or "Stagg") is an amalgamation of several different species from his homeworld. He has been genetically altered by karn's bio-engineering specialists for survival on a variety of different terrain, including mountains, deserts and glaciers. Stagg is swift as a gazelle, agile as a silverback gorilla (and thrice as strong), and as fleet-of-foot as a mountain goat. Like any animal, he has hyperkeen senses: hearing, night vision, and particularly smell. Volstagg is the most physical of our heroes. And the most jovial.



Crystal

Crystal is the least emotional of our gang. She is cool and sardonic, like Mr. Spock, but what she lacks in attitude is more than made up by her hair, which has a life of its own! Crystal learns over time that she is, in fact, living crystal. She is an experiment, the only one of her kind. Her crystalline genetic matrix allows her to deflect light (and thus, laser beams) like a prism, and create crystal spheres with which to imprison people.



Mac

A cyborg with an ever-shifting robotic body and the mind of a nineteen-year-old party animal, Mac digs his life of adventure. Party on! Mac's body can shift in dozens of ways. his arms can sprout into M-60s, and his legs change into turbo-jets, enabling him to fly at Mach-2. his eyes can spring into telephotolens. Titanium coils can project from his arms, ensnaring an opponent (or, for instance, an irate B'Angus!). And his computer-enhanced mind provides him with pinpoint targeting capabilities: when firing short-range missiles from his forearm-rocket launchers, he has unerring aim. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.



Pokkit

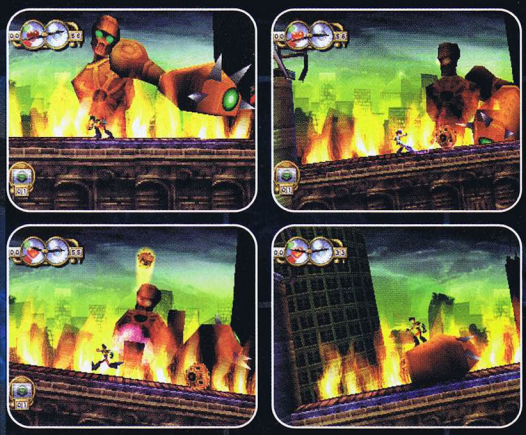
The diminutive Pokkit would be the most powerful member of the Wild Nines if only he possessed enough self-confidence to use his power effectively. He doesn't. Pokkit is an experiment in biowarp-technology. He wears a jacket filled with countless pockets. When he pulls one open and reaches in, he can produce anything he wants. The only problem is, he doesn't have the mental discipline to produce what he needs. So when they need him to pull out a bazooka, Pokkit reaches in and yanks out... a jelly donut?!

WEX, is he Major?

As a lead character, they don't come much cooler than Wex Major. Even close up, for a polygonal character, he is ultra solid and fluidly animated. Jumping is precise and intuitive and the Rig is simply a joy to unleash, sounding like a cross between Darth Vader's Tie Fighter and Peter Venkman's unlicensed nuclear accelerator. As for that face, well, rumor has it that if you morphed DP and TT, Conan O'Brien style... nah, it's just a rumor. An appointment I thoroughly appreciate... as The Rig grows in strength, it does so in size as well, and it's apparent on the model. This should always be the case, but so often is not. Wex talks quite a bit as well, vocally celebrating power-ups, missile and grenade discovery, and other select events.

Special effects abound... Let there be light!

The effects in *Wild 9* will astonish even the hardest to enthuse. Polygonal structures move and sway constantly as you play on them, as do items among them, like chunks of asphalt. Hanging lamps emitting light can be swayed by the touch, textured transparent materials glow vividly, and you will witness the most epic explosions in PlayStation history. The levels literally pulse with animation. From mind-blowing steam and smoke to dancing flames and reflecting water, Shiny have packed in legendary amounts of pyrotechnics and lighting. Wex is so thrilled by it all that, if you leave him to his own devices, he'll break out in a little jig.



This pain-in-the-arse giant robot doesn't know when to quit. You'll need to rid him of both his arms (you encounter him twice in the level) and then deal with his head... as he tries to butt you to death!



In the floating twisted streets of Craterscape, this burning taxi poses a problem. Wex can't get by without getting burned. What to do? When in doubt, whip The Rig out! A nearby minion generator will supply the bodies. All Wex has to do is pound a couple into the flames. Once the fire's out, use the taxi to jump out of this ravaged patch of decayed highway.

Torture Has Never Been So Much Fun...

Fire up the rig and pummel the enemy until he begs like a dog... then finish him!

Each vast area is a virtual breeding ground of Karn minions. Put them down and carry on - revenge is near!

The explosions in Wild 9 are nuclear assaults with shockwaves in tow. Toss a grenade and watch the enemy squirm before detonation.





2D gameplay among 3D environments has never looked or felt so good! The polygonal structures in Wild 9 pulse with life and there's always somebody (or thing) to play with!

As usual, Shiny bosses don't die easily. This ancient pain in the keester has more than a few tricks up his rock.









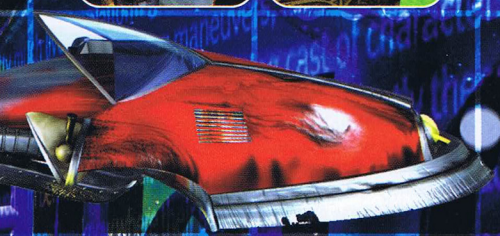




When Wex finds a lever he always does something clever. I doubt they'll live to tell about it. Between levels, Shiny segues abound. Ride a rocket, saddle up on an alien beast, or free-fall your way to the next destination.















Some in-game polygonal models. All of the in-game characters look solid and animate in their own special way.



A word from *The 9's* producer Stuart Roch...

When I first saw *Wild 9* in action earlier this year, the thing that impressed me most was the innovative gameplay mechanic. It's definitely not your run-of-the-mill "jump on a baddie's head" or "shoot the enemy with a gun" style of gameplay. Instead of creating a derivative platformer, Shiny has set out to create a character game that advances the genre to the next level. The way that we're hopefully doing this is with the Rig and Glove gameplay mechanic. Say you encounter an enemy that's blocking your path; instead of butt stomping him, it's much more satisfying to actually grab the enemy with Wex Major's beam, lift him right off the ground, and then slam him back and forth on the floor and literally beat him into submission. To go a step further, say you just passed a huge meat grinder in the level and you happen upon a Shock Trooper. Instead of slamming the baddie with the Rig this time, grab him in the beam, swing him over your head, and carry him back to the grinder and drop him into it. It's amazing to see the ear-to-ear smile on people's faces when they drop a guard into a grinder and puree him to a fine mulch. Rather than offering a couple of attack methods, Wex Major's Rig and Glove actually open up a whole slew of possibilities as to how the player decides to dispatch their foes.

Which leads us to the torture aspect of *Wild 9*. This is the first game that allows the player to literally torture their enemies. While this sounds like a fancy marketing line, it actually means that the *Wild 9* team is giving gamers all sorts of different ways to kill off their enemies. It's really up to the player's imagination as to how they want to get through a level. The player could slam enemies, grind them up, impale them, drown them, use them as bait - the list goes on and on. As much as the player is exploring the environment, they're also exploring all the interactive elements within that environment which they could use to torture enemies. It seems pretty obvious that grabbing an enemy and placing him in an open flame would set the baddie on fire, but consider placing that same enemy into the thick black smoke emanating from the fire. Instead of burning the enemy, the player can also use the fire's smoke to choke the struggling enemy until he eventually goes lifeless. The team is working really hard to put as many torture possibilities into the game as possible.

While the torture mechanic is gratifying to the player in itself, the team also wants to make sure that the torture ties into the puzzles within the game. Say for instance that the player happens upon a huge jet of fire that is blocking his path. A typical platform game might require the player to wait for the timed fire to turn off momentarily so that they can pass through it. While this is a classic gameplay mechanic, it's also been done a thousand times before, so why do it again. When you come across that fire jet in *Wild 9*, instead of waiting for the fire to time out, grab the closest slob you can find with the beam and slam him into the fire nozzle a few times. With a few good whacks, the player can extinguish the fire by slamming the Trooper's flailing body onto the nozzle. The player will have to think a little more while playing *Wild 9*; it's definitely not a straight shooter or precision jump fest.

pen pen tricelon

By Mike Griffin

PenPen Tricelon is General Entertainment's new action racing game. Scheduled to launch simultaneously this November 20 with the Dreamcast, it is among the most intriguing of the first run titles. This is probably due to the staff responsible for *PenPen* - members of the *Panzer Dragoon*, *Sega Rally*, and *J-League Pro Soccer* development teams. Team LAND HO! (as they're known) is an eclectic crew with countless incredible members from Sega's past and present, lending credibility to the game's unique design.

PenPen is a completely new type of racing game. Up until now, most racing games have used a specific vehicle from start to finish to cover the type of terrain that can accommodate it. *PenPen* is structured very similarly to a triathlon, in that three unique events are the focus. You run, swim, and slide to the finish line, blazing through unique objectives for each racing type. The racers are bizarre little creatures called PenPens, and they're well suited for each type of racing situation. Not only are they able to navigate through incredibly expansive running courses, twisting underwater seascapes, and giant steep hills, but they can also attack and block from all directions. Best of all, there will be absolutely no loading between competitions, so you can enjoy course after course with very little wasted time. Let's take a look at the race and course types first, and then we'll get back to the PenPen characters for a little in-depth info.











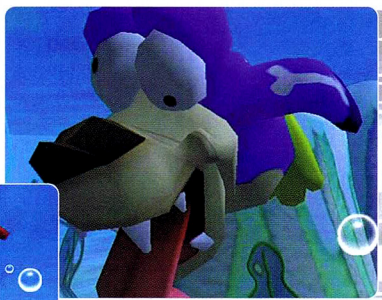
What is a Tricelon?

A Tricelon is a race involving a Run event, Swim event, and Slide event instead of the traditional Run/Bike/Swim combination. The Tricelon is conducted on a single, extremely long racetrack, and you don't go around the track completing laps like traditional racing games. You have to be skilled in all three varieties of racing since each event covers all three types. Depending on the section of the track, you might have to block and/or interrupt your opponents instead of purely racing for fun or best times. Also, there will be loads of obstacles scattered about on the tracks to make racing as involving as possible. In other words, the Tricelon is a race, battle, and obstacle course all in one.

What is a Pen Pen?

The PenPen is a species of creature that belongs, strangely enough, to the Penguin family. They are extremely energetic creatures who like nothing more than to move around quickly. Their intellect is minimal, so they aren't capable of complex communication. They may not be geniuses, but they are very curious, competitive beasts who do not like to lose. This explains why the PenPens use clever tactics as they race - and they race often. When they are unable to participate in competitions with fellow PenPens, they become very sedated, disoriented creatures. Do these penguin abominations live on earth? No, they come from a distant planet, where they have evolved quickly over the course of several centuries.

Continued on page 32



The Swimming sections:
The underwater sections will look spectacular. Masses of detailed trackside obstacles will be littered everywhere, and the swimming control is said to be revolutionary.

Back *Type: TodoPen Sex: Male*

Back is one mellow dude. He likes to chill out, and take it all in. He's a powerful racer, however, with an extremely dangerous temper that should never be tested. His peaceful demeanor will quickly turn ugly, and competitors will know it. Back is a good Slider, too.

The Running sections:

Similar to Sonic R, the running sections will have you bumping and grinding through the crowds on colorful wide-open roads. You'll definitely need to cut corners and create shortcuts.





Little is known about the courses and obstacles found throughout the Running event. We are expecting plenty of hazards and devious track design to liven things up a bit.













Ballery *Type: KabaPen Sex: Female*

Ballery is constantly getting in your face, trying to look cute. She's desperate for attention. Nobody thinks she's a beauty, though, so she becomes jealous of others (like Tina) and often loses her composure. She runs like a champ.



Mr.Bow *Type: InuPen Sex: Male*

Mr.Bow is a speedy, energetic racer with a very deceiving appearance. You see, he appears to be stupid - at least that's how most competitors see him initially - but his underlying skill and cunning is unmatched. Beware his power in all Running events.

Sparky *Type: PenPen Sex: Male*

Sparky is a childish, energetic PenPen. He's friendly and helpful among others of his kind, making sure that things run smoothly in the community. On the track, however, he's an unforgiving speed freak. His strength is the Sliding event.



Artwork & Images © General Entertainment. 1998.









There are six different types of PenPens: the PenPen, KabaPen, TodoPen, InuPen, TakoPen, and SamePen. The PenPen are divided into two categories: Big and Small. Big PenPens are not very good at quick, precise sharp turning. They aren't too susceptible to contact, which is good, and they have powerful but inaccurate attacking abilities. Small PenPens are cornering fiends, they're not so good at handling collisions, and their attack power is medium but accurate. You can stick with the same PenPen for each race, but chances are you'll have trouble with certain courses. You have to pay close attention to their wide range of unique advantages and disadvantages in order to conquer each race. Also, in addition to their fundamental moves (running, swimming, sliding), each PenPen excels in certain types of racing environments. You're never required to use a specific PenPen on any course, but you're supposed to scrutinize their abilities and choose one with inherent advantages to increase your chances of winning or widening the gap in a race. If you choose wisely and take the win, you'll be rewarded with happy expressions on your PenPen's face. Your PenPen's expression will turn sour during races when you're attacked, passed, or after a loss, so keep him happy!

Well, what do we think then?

PenPen Tricelon will be one of the best release titles on Dreamcast. The engine will be very good, drawing gigantic tracks far off into the horizon with no hint of slow-down or hideous clipping. Also, the theme sounds too cool to miss. The only missing element is the multiplayer mode, which is currently being tweaked by Team LAND HO! At this point, they haven't decided whether to add a bunch of split-screen modes, several modem play options, or both. I'm sure the machine can handle the action either way. Stay posted for even more *PenPen* action with a special behind-the-scenes report next issue.

Sliding sections:

How bizarre! Slide sections will be very, very fast. Obstacles are perhaps more of a problem, too, since momentum plays havoc with certain elements of the control.



Sneak *Type: TakoPen Sex: Male*

Sneak is a freak. It usually doesn't take much to make him excitable and hyperactive, whether it's the most insignificant good news or a race win. He is also intolerably mischievous. Despite all his flaws, though, the guy can swim like a fish.







Jaw *Type: SamePen Sex: Male*

As a member of the SamePen variety of PenPen, Jaw is naturally violent. He takes it to the extreme, just like everything else he does. His fits of rage make him an incredibly dangerous competitor, and he angers easily. He's also a great Swimmer.



Tina *Type: Penguin PenPen Sex: Female*

Tina loves to wear fashionable outfits to the track. She spends a lot of money dining out, too much time trying to look sexy, and she has far too much pride. Her efforts are put to good use, though, as competitors become distracted by her presence. She's a good Slider.

godzilla generations

By Mike Hobbs





Born out of the ashes of an atomic-fueled paranoia, Godzilla personified the great threat of nuclear war as an all powerful city destroyer and went on to become one of the most recognizable Japanese icons in history. Sega are hoping to capitalize on that status with *Godzilla Generations*, a Dreamcast launch title being developed by General Entertainment, a company made up of ex-Sega employees. Though there is still frightfully little information on the actual nature of the gameplay or your objectives, it's clear that it's the original, classic Godzilla being celebrated here, and not the new creature from Sony's terrible summer film. Hmm...

Taking advantage of the incredibly high specifications of the Dreamcast hardware, *Godzilla Generations* will feature almost unimaginable graphic effects that far exceed what could be accomplished on current consoles. Hi-res, 60 fps cityscapes populated with little moving cars and one super smooth Godzilla running around should be a visual treat. Watching buildings crumble in a shower of polygonal objects will be an experience that the current generations of hardware (save for a fully kitted PC) simply cannot manage. Whether destroying the cities is actually part of your gameplay objectives is unknown at this time, but it sure looks to be good fun. And joining Godzilla in this polygonal reign of terror will be Mothra, Mechagodzilla, and Ghidrah. Other monsters have not yet been announced, but we have a feeling that you can expect some surprises in the roster. More information as it becomes available.







While these are actual game screens, it is still unclear what specific mission objectives will be and exactly how the player will interact with Godzilla.







Godzilla against his greatest villains

Expect surprise announcements and special appearances!

blood 2

by Dave Rees

Get ready for an enormous crimson tide!

Blood 2 takes extreme violence to an all new extreme!

It used to be a dark, wild West filled with brain-hungry, pitchfork-wielding zombies, satanic priests, and more voodooism than Gabriel Knight could ever shake a stick at, but much has changed over the past 100 years. The Cabal is now a supremely powerful, omnipresent underground cult underhandedly subsidized by a global corporate entity with worldwide economic interests. But Caleb, *Blood's* infamous and petulant protagonist, is back, and he is poised to reclaim his rightful rule of the Cabal by overthrowing Gideon, the cult's authoritarian leader. His hope to resurrect the original three Chosen - Ophelia, Gabriella, and Ishmael - has finally come to fruition, and with the four of them working in unison, Caleb has a good chance of regaining his throne. But he'll need your help, of course.

With its ominous setting, dark humor and creepy atmosphere, *Blood* was a game that had plenty of gore, but also personality. The question that one must ask is: Will *Blood 2* possess the charm of the original? Without being judgmental, it is safe to say yes and no. After all, the year 2028 is likely to be quite a bit different than the year 1830 was. But aside from the time and setting, there is a long list of technical improvements across the board that will likely make the game more interesting than the original.

Four different customizable characters (the Chosen) are all selectable for play, each with his own appeal. Sounding more like an RPG, the customization will allow players to alter weapons, abilities, attributes, and even inventory items for a more personal experience. Powered by a contemporary 3D engine, the game will include many of the visual and aural effects we are now expecting in FPS games: fully interactive environments, polygon specific targeting, superior AI, dynamic colored lighting, detailed smoke effects, and a context sensitive soundtrack. Add in the always familiar vociferous insults, a huge cache of over 30 weapons (yes, the voodoo doll is back), a wide array of outrageous death animation sequences (including scenes of slow and painful dismemberment), and some horrific otherworldly creatures, and *Blood 2* is already poised to surpass the original's indelible reputation.

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It begins with nothing more than soft music and darkness. As the camera shifts and slowly floats downward, we see what remains of a castle and, in the center, a small figure. The music drifts on and the camera slowly focuses on this small blue-haired character, elegantly playing her violin, and after a few seconds, the main logo appears. *Castlevania 64*, perhaps the most anticipated 3rd party game ever for the Nintendo 64, starts with such a simple, yet incredibly powerful intro, it's almost impossible to describe in mere words.



Castlevanias, essentially, have always been classic 2D titles. Packed with incredible artwork, gameplay, and music, these games have delivered an emotional experience almost untouched by any other. Now, we have to come to terms with the fact that the groundwork has been shifted a bit, and a series we could always feel comfortable playing, no matter what system it appeared on, is radically different. We now control our character in a 3D world, and with it, experience 3D difficulties. Perhaps the game seems too different now, as simply getting from one end of the screen to the other is a thing of the past. With beasts that attack from any angle, whip swings that require careful aiming in an x and y axis, and a cross-hair that designates where your weapon will hit, this title feels almost too alien at times to be *Castlevania*. Thankfully, though, Konami hasn't forgotten a few of the basics. Most of the creatures you'll face in this new world are more than a bit familiar, the locations are all too classic, and the non-intro music we heard, although currently nothing more than placeholder tracks, is exceptionally high quality (and quite comforting).

castlevania 64

by Ryan Lockhart

Will this *Castlevania* live up to the ones we've played in the past? Probably not, if you judge it solely by its 2D predecessors. What we can expect, however, is a game that lets us experience a new side of *Castlevania*, where we can spend as much time exploring gothic environments as we do fighting through them. It'll be interesting, to say the least... ☣



The CG artwork, a first for any Castlevania game, gives you an idea what the other controllable characters will look like. The most impressive of these is the one to the right, Frankenstein's Monster...

CASTLEVANIA










As you can see from these shots, the locations in this new Castlevania are as diverse as in the original games.



The new "cross-hair" aiming feature is used not only to to aid in your attacks, but also to give you an idea which way your character is facing, no matter what direction you're moving in.



While we only saw Schneider, one of the four main characters, Konami promise the rest will be just as detailed.



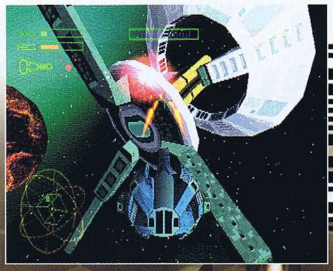




Notice the fire-breathing skeleton heads in the top shot, an indication of the classic characters you'll face in Castlevania 64. The bars on the bottom of these pictures are just placeholder for now (they represent the music volume) - don't expect them in the final.

Greater realism in the characters and backgrounds enhances its movie-like qualities

The visual flair far exceeds all of Konami's previous 3D games



By Mike Hobbs

colony wars vengeance

A surprise hit last year, Psygnosis' beautiful *Colony Wars* jump-started a traditionally neglected segment of the 32-bit market. Normally a rather dry and sim-like genre, *Colony Wars* added a very high tech sheen and an arcade quickness to the 3D space shooter and wrapped it all up in an evolving storyline. It was quite an achievement, and Psygnosis are about to deliver even more with *Colony Wars Vengeance*.

Though it can't hope to feel as fresh as the original or hold the same visual shock received from seeing its graphics for the first time, *CWV* is about as ambitious a follow-up imaginable. Missions, though fewer in number, feature a greater variety in objective and there are user selectable ships and all new planet surface levels. Also, the story has you this time fighting for the Navy as opposed to the League of Freeworlds. It turns out they were a bunch of scum. Now playing under the leadership of Kron, you make it your mission to bring down the tyranny of the League.

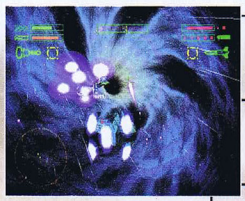
More than this switch in point of view, it's the new surface missions that most distinguish this title from its predecessor. Although the limitations of the hardware won't allow for the same kind of visual brilliance of the outer space missions (there's a lot of fog), it's good to see them just the same. And they impress in their own right. For instance, watching a giant mechanical spider crawl up over a hill was a new kind of *Colony Wars* thrill. The deep space engine gets a tweak as well, and you're now surrounded by more star streaks and more general activity within the frame.

Psygnosis are just putting the finishing touches on *CWV* and all indications are that it will be everything the first game was and more - a model sequel. We'll formally review *Colony Wars Vengeance* next month. >8<

Psygnosis redefined the three-dimensional shooter with last year's Colony Wars...

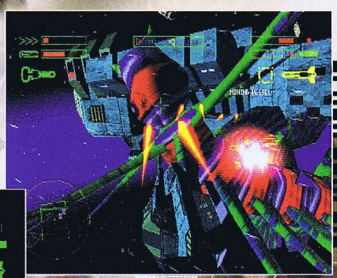
Can they avoid the sophomore curse with their much anticipated sequel?













This year's *Cool Boarders* update actually feels like an update as opposed to an incidental, money-making sequel. Both the engine and gameplay have been retooled in a number of ways, and the play-mechanics now offer several elements that haven't been attempted before, including a dedicated fighting system to fend off competitors. Previously, comparing a PS *Cool Boarders* game to other snowboarding games (like *Steep Slope Sliders* on Saturn, *1080°* on N64) was easy, but thanks to intelligent new features, *Cool Boarders 3* might end up being a required purchase.

Past *Cool Boarders* games had one glaring flaw: poor jump and trick execution. In *Cool Boarders 3*, the jump mechanic has been mostly re-tooled. Jumps that were essentially being "charged" in *CB2* (in the ducking, pre-jump position) can now be monitored via the power bar. You can choose the appropriate amount of power applied to any jump this way, so certain types of ramps and/or terrain can be dealt with accordingly. Flips and spins come quick and effortlessly, grabs can be added in a pinch, and every move or combination is monitored by a retouched, easy reading display at the top of the screen. The Sharp Turn button makes a return appearance, while full Dual Shock vibes and analog control are now supported. Also, as mentioned, *CB3* includes useful punch moves to knock aside pesky boarders breathing down your neck - a first in home snowboarding games. Fans of the series should be realizing now that all these improvements are a huge step forward, while newbies should be able to enjoy a good third generation snowboarding game.

In addition, you can race three other carvers on the tournament-type tracks. This is a challenging ordeal, as the CPU boarders appear to love the fisticuffs. The sense of competition is heightened, the game has more personality, and you'll hold grudges against these punks in *Road Rash*-esque fashion - especially when your tournament standings depend on it.

I played the first two *Cool Boarders* games to death, despite numerous flaws. This latest version needs to set the standard to earn a place among the best. 989 Studios and new developers Idol Minds have an opportunity to set it straight. Good luck.

coolboarders 3

By Mike Griffin











deception 2

by Dave Rees

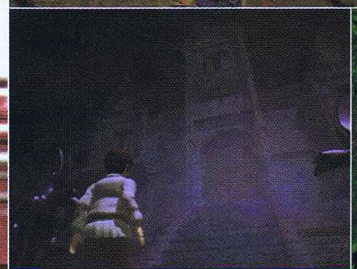
Ah, the ubiquity of deception. Whether the motive is to cause a paltry moment of embarrassment or to afflict serious harm, it rears its ugly head in all of our lives at one time or another. With meticulous planning and perfect timing, such dastardly deeds are destined to succeed, but always looked down upon in the end. In the world of gaming, we typically attempt to end the scandalous exploits of such personalities, but in the world of Tecmo's *Deception*, the tables are turned.

When the original *Deception* was released, it required you to play the antagonist, a prospective king of the Castle of the Damned, and eliminate the many imposing protagonists who were determined to impede your efforts. But while most arch nemeses are loaded with outrageous attack methods and weaponry, your abilities were limited to the cunning placement of traps and various forms of trickery. Those who bought into the game's unique concept will surely remember just how effective and outright satisfying such devious methods can be.

The menagerie of traps at one's disposal in Tecmo's *Deception* brings about fond memories: spikes that shoot out of walls and impale your victims, fire bombs descending from the ceiling and crushing with burning conviction, giant feet stomping on those below, electrically charged cages trapping and frying the weary, and even a collection of werewolves, zombies and golems for you to unleash. But it has been awhile since the initial game's debut, which causes one to only imagine what Tecmo might have cooked up; it looks like they have spent a lot of time back at the drawing board, as the number of traps at your disposal has been dramatically increased.

But while the game does boast several improvements and changes over the original, it may disappoint those looking for an experience that is as deep. There are obvious technical improvements in the graphics engine and overall interface. But where are the items? Why can't I build my own rooms? What about killing for gold or stealing souls for MP? Such features were what made the original game so intriguing, but they came with a hefty price tag: nine memory card slots were required to save. In *Deception 2*, a saved game requires one slot, but the game lacks the robust set of features of the original. But before I become too judgmental, there really is nothing else that comes close to playing the bad guy, and the game will likely please those awaiting its arrival.











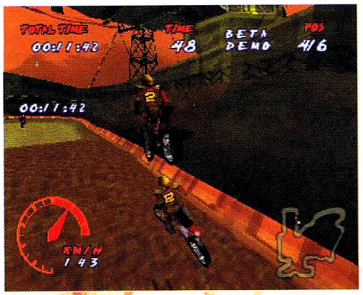


d.i.r.t

By Dave Halverson

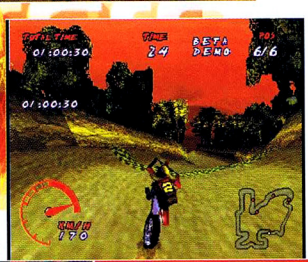
Funcom grabs the holeshot!

more motocross action's on tap...



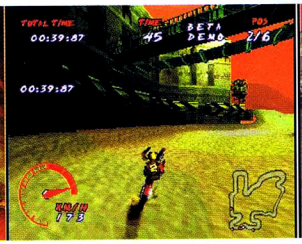


From the unlikeliest of sources comes the third thoroughbred Motocross game for the PlayStation. The talented software developers at Funcom are hard at work perfecting *D.I.R.T*, their first foray into two-wheeled mayhem. With three Motocross games to its credit, the PlayStation is now the number one console representing the genre - one that has yet to reach its full potential. Recently, the most mediocre of MX'ers, *Jeremy McGrath's* "I-had-nothing-to-do-with-this-game" *Supercross '98* sold very well even though it borders on totally lame. So, if they build it, they now know, we will come. In lieu of a true simulation, Funcom have taken a novel approach and are creating a sort of fantasy/reality MX hybrid. The courses are wide and fast, set among dank fantastical backdrops, and the riders are wonderfully exaggerated, taking on an almost *Vectorman* like fluidity. The bikes - pipey, nimble two-strokes - are decidedly delicate feeling as you maneuver them with a combination of the analog wand, R&L1 for precision slides, and ❐ for braking. Funcom's engine is among the best the PS can muster, rivaling any previous two-wheeled racer in terms of texture quality, frame rate, line of sight, and solidity. All the prerequisite modes (Time Trial, Free Run, and Championship) are here as well, along with the addition of a Quick-Race option that allows you to practice with the other five competitors on the track. A total of nine tracks are planned in all (although our demo featured only two - hence the orange). Currently only two bikes are available, with no brand names in sight, but once *D.I.R.T* finds a publisher in the U.S. this could









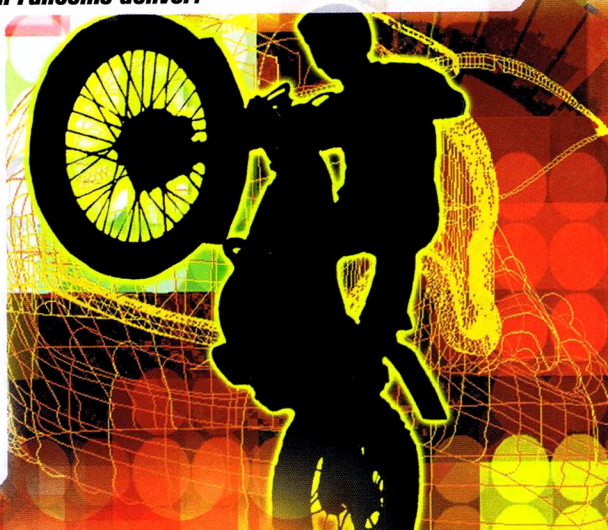


The world's most physically demanding sport is starting to get some respect among gaming circles... now all we need is a benchmark title. Can Funcoms deliver?



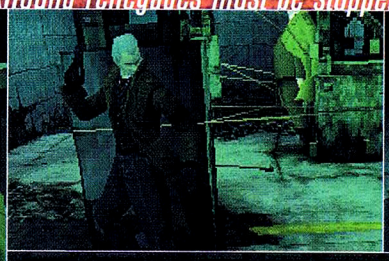
change, although I opt for more cash to be spent on the game rather than wasted on licensing; this isn't the NFL. Most people probably don't know who sanctions Supercross events anyway. I told the staff here that I could get an interview with Jeremy McGrath and they all went, "who?"

D.I.R.T was strong in all areas represented in our beta demo: The course layout, control and psychics are all right on track and it deserves big style points as well. The bikes and riders look striking, with realistic suspension and wicked multi-jointed body antics. The AI needs some tweaking (riders fall far too easily or for no reason at all and you can't adjust properly in the air yet) and I need to see some more tracks, but overall I'd say Funcom have all the makings of a great racer. Of course, down the final stretch is where it all comes together, so let's hope Funcom don't let it fly until it's got wings enough to leave the competition in the dust with a few chunks of mud wedged between their teeth.

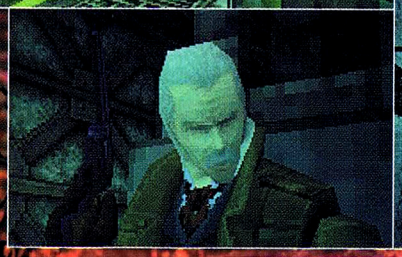


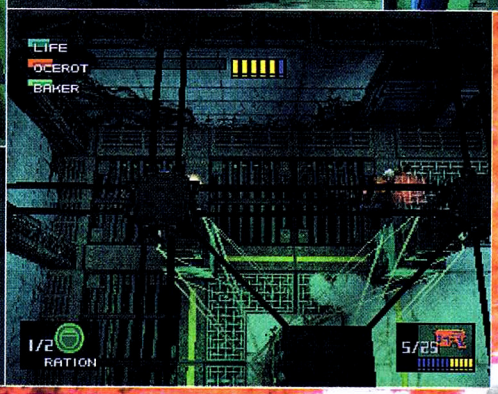
The enemy shows its face at last! The FoxHound renegades must be stopped at all costs!











(Clockwise from top-left) Kenneth Baker struggles to free himself from several hundred pounds of plastic explosives and razor wire, Revolver Ocelot brandishes his six-shooter, the Ninja intervenes, Revolver looks concerned, and the battle commences!

The seamless cut-scenes displayed with in-game graphics serve to deeply involve the game's player before the fraught action begins!



metal gear solid

Snake's arrival is imminent!

By David Hodgson

The final Japanese game is playtested prior to the official release; we uncover further mission info below!

By now, many of the more fanatical *Metal Gear Solid* followers will be in possession of the import copy of the game, and providing they have an almost complete knowledge of the Japanese language, they'll be having a whale of a time completing this complex, highly original and damn near perfect video game. Everyone else, however, will be frantically scanning the Internet for hints, translations and other cheats as they plow through cut-scene after cut-scene of incomprehensible dialogue. For you see, *Metal Gear Solid* is a game that needs to be played with a full compliment of English text and speech - a fact that became all too apparent when our resident Japanese translator informed me that I'd been looking for doorways without the appropriate key in entirely the wrong area for two hours... However, this was the only hitch in an otherwise enthralling five-hour playtest of an almost complete Japanese copy of the game. Along with hints at the numerous plot twists from Konami representatives, we uncovered a number of key gameplay elements that serve great dollops of hype to the already volatile brew of excitement pervading the industry. Below is a brief run-down of the newly acquired information regarding the storming of the Shadow Moses base...

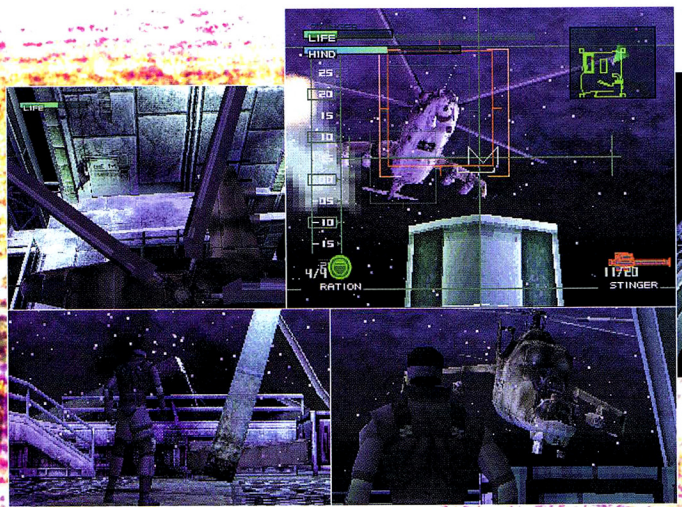
Perhaps the most interesting new addition to the game is a Training mode. This is almost essential to your increased enjoyment of the actual game, and involves Mister Snake stealthily sneaking through *Tron*-like virtual arenas while utilizing his combat and covert capabilities. The first five zones are straightforward enough, while the rest have you scrambling for cover and dodging searchlights, gun cameras and guards patrolling raised areas. Essentially, anyone wanting to maximize his enjoyment of the game should learn combat merits here, rather than diving into the game itself and receiving bullets to the back (for example) before learning to aim the laser-sighted Socom pistol. Of course, the further you get in Training, the more fiendish the zone enhancements become, leading to a whole new sub-game of the same caliber as Tekken Force.

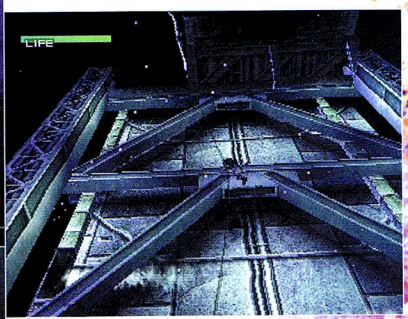
But the aspect of the game that really impressed us was the number of never-before-seen levels that we romped through with relish. Aside from the ambient (yet intensive during battles) "stealth" score, there was a rather frantic interrogation with whom we assume is Donald Anderson (a military contractor who's apparently building the mech behemoths known as Metal Gears). This real-time cut-scene included Donald's heart attack, all manner of perfectly motioned gestures and masses of voice acting. Even the Dual Shock pad gets a look in here, as the pad vibrates with a quickening heart beat to emulate Donald's demise. Simply stunning stuff, but not quite as manic as the scuffle that followed with the no-nonsense Meryl Silverberg. She actually overpowers a guard, steals his uniform and catches you at gunpoint as you escape Donald's cell! A host of extra touches (such as the dizzied guard lying naked and prone with a mosaic effect covering his genitalia - which, incidentally, will be removed and underpants added in the final Japanese version of the game) add a tone of reality not seen in a video game before. The reason? All the cut-scenes use in-game graphics rather than CG, allowing a sense of believability throughout the 16+ hours of gameplay.

Later into the game, we uncovered a weapons storage area housing C4 explosives (used to demolish walls and even some bosses later into the game!), before our first official Foxhound combat operative was faced - the Russian Revolver Ocelot. After a fraught five minutes of gunfire and avoiding a mass of wires and explosives, our battle was halted by an uncloaking ninja who hacked the Ocelot's hand clean off and danced about the screen to the accompaniment of screen blur and breathtaking visual effects. Later still, we descended a 200 foot compound while Liquid Snake's helicopter bombarded the building with machinegun fire. This was, of course, after we ascended the seemingly never-ending stairwell inside the tower, with a quartet of guards in tow (one of the many occasions when the fabled stun grenades came in rather handy).

Getting to grips with another couple pieces of killing ordinance, we unloaded a Nikita missile and watched with increasing pleasure as it turned various corners (under our complete control) and detonated in the middle of an enemy guard meeting. The remaining troopers were dealt death blows courtesy of our Sniper Rifle (cue laser sight, spectacular zoom in, and head shots!).

Finally, we witnessed a rather impressive helicopter battle between Solid and his nemesis, Liquid Snake, atop a huge observation post, which resulted in a flurry of ground-to-air missiles from our recently obtained rocket launcher. These momentous battles defined a new breed of gameplay, while masses of extra touches (such as a guard's line-of-sight disappearing should he yawn or sneeze!) ensure that the entire project will be well worth your wait.

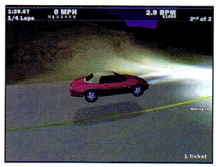


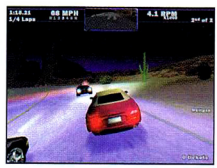


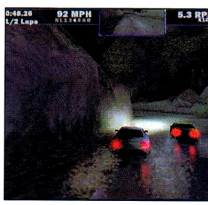
Later into the mission (clockwise from top), Solid Snake creeps down a tower, is attacked by Liquid Snake in a Hind stealth chopper, continues his descent, before finally facing his nemesis yet again in a frantic confrontation!











need for speed III

When this racer is released... ...there will be no looking back!

by Dave Rees

One cannot deny that the graphics in *Need for Speed III* look unbelievable. The shimmering reflective mapping on the cars alone is so overpowering that it initially distracts from the gameplay. The environments are so panoramic and the lighting is so genuine that playing the game can feel more like a scenic drive than an intense race to the finish line. But as stunning as the visuals are, they thankfully do not compensate for any lack of control, gameplay or features, as is the case with other racing games of late.

Need For Speed III: Hot Pursuit is striving to add a new element to the PC arcade racing genre that has to this date been practically unheard of: exceptional AI. The game offers computer controlled opponents that are not just empty hunks of metal which drive without flaw; they have personalities, and if you piss them off they seek revenge and sometimes fall behind because of it. They make mistakes, misjudgments, and even end up in rather nasty collisions of their own. Continue to bump into and pass one particular driver and he'll do his best to return the favor. Soon enough, you'll be cursing the computer players as they continually bump you off the road, and winning the game becomes personal.





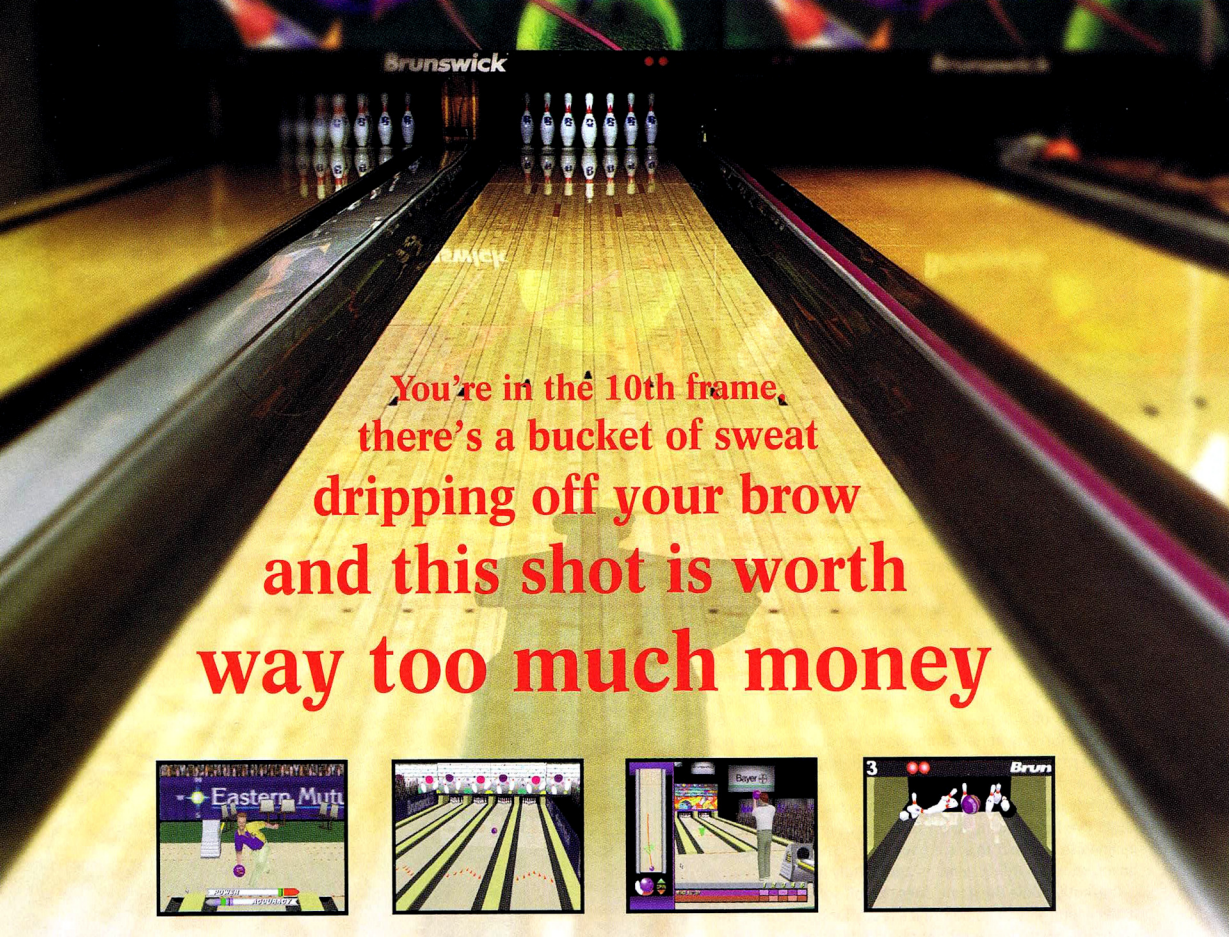


The PlayStation has had its own version of *NFS III* for some time now, but those waiting for the PC version will likely be glad they did. Although it appears that the courses are identical, the PC version has many exclusive features, least of which are its unique modes of play combined with its multiplayer options. The game includes single race and tournament modes, but what could amount to the most outrageous fun ever had in a racing game is the Hot Pursuit mode. Chase down other human opponents in an incredibly powerful pursuit vehicle, and enjoy the satisfaction of handing out tickets to your friends. Potentially, this game can be played over and over, with just as much enjoyment each time. And we expect the final product to be even more inviting when it is released this fall.









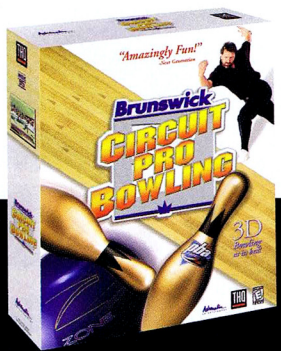
You're in the 10th frame,
there's a bucket of sweat
dripping off your brow
and this shot is worth
way too much money

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Adrenalin ENTERTAINMENT





When it comes to the Adventure/"Hoverdek" Racing/Platforming/Shooting genre, Psygnosis' *Psybadek* is the clear choice. It's also the only choice. One of the more peculiar games I've played (anyone remember *Cosmic Race*?), here's one that will draw comparison from no other. When *Psybadek* hits the streets, the end product will either be a revolutionary new gaming experience or a case

psybadek

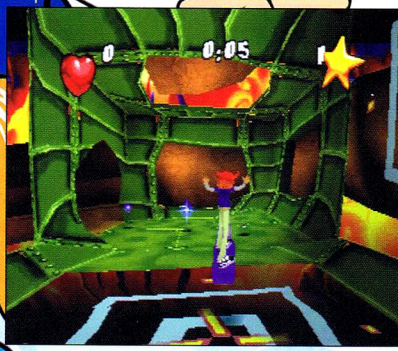
By Dave Halverson

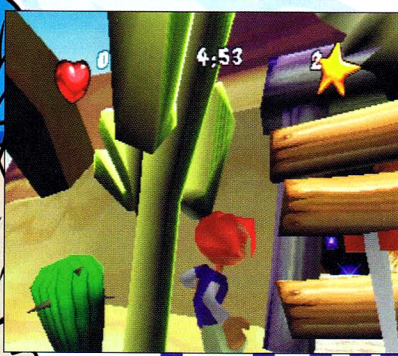
I can pretty much guarantee... you've never played a game like this before

study on the result of smoking crack and developing a video game. In *Psybadek* you play as the "Manga inspired" (they look more like Bebe's kids to me) Xako or Mia. Your goal is the eminent rescue of your friends from the evil clutches of Krakken and his henchmen (they always have henchmen!). Throughout five worlds (Ice, Jungle, Desert, Under and one other) and 50 zones you'll perform a broad range of tasks such as pivoting on an ice cap while shooting penguins, corralling "cactus cattle" into a pen, dodging huge rolling chunks of earth, performing aerial stunts, shooting or bouncing on a twisted assortment of enemies, negotiating slippery platforms, and, of course, fighting nasty bosses. *Psybadek* is definitely not the downhill racer I expected (in light of the shots I've been gazing at for the past 18 months), but I'm inclined to say that this is a good thing. The coursebound hover/snow boarding genre is adequately filled.

Currently, while the game does exhibit some fresh ideas, it has a long way to go before it's ready for prime time. The control is pretty loose (although doable after some training), the collision is all out of whack, and the engine falls victim to the worst clipping I think I've ever seen; poly's drop out all around your character almost every step of the way. On the plus side, the action is extremely fluid, both the art and graphics are superb, the effects look Psygnoselicious, and the music is incredible. Funkiness aside, I have high hopes for *Psybadek*. Having spoken with the head cheese at Psygnosis leads me to believe that they're putting some marketing muscle and serious coinage behind this title. If they button it up right, *Psybadek* could be their next big PlayStation title following *Colony Wars* and *G-Police*, the last two bonafied hits from the busiest software developer in the industry.

Psybadek is Negcon and Dual Shock compatible and will be available this winter. I'll see you back here with a review as soon as we get a final.













Xako between two warps, pivoting on an icy plateau shooting penguins and taking aim on a pork roast!



rogue trip

By Mike Griffin

Take a mad roadtrip through hell!

Crush all wheeled opponents with fiery weapons!

Let's face it: Beating down a freaky ensemble of vehicles with your own missile spewing abomination really is a great feeling. You're faced with manic driving, multiple ruthless opponents, loads of weapons (each with unique functions), and a constant need to re-assess your chances of survival. So essentially I see vehicular combat games (when they're good) as the ultimate amalgamation of strategy, beating up, and blasting. *Twisted Metal* pumped life into the genre back in the day, *TM2* was good, and *Vigilante 8*... well, you know how much I like that one. The creators of *Twisted Metal*, Singletrac, have yet another offering in the genre before the release of *TM3*, titled *Rogue Trip*. And although I admire the clearly defined objectives and themes for each level, I get the impression *Rogue Trip* is pushing the PS beyond its limits at times, or perhaps Singletrac's designs are too ambitious. Regardless, the game has some very good ideas.

Most games in this genre don't offer the kind of structured gameplay that people crave. *V8* included a light plot line complete with objects to protect or destroy in each level, depending upon which Vigilante gang you were driving for. In *Rogue Trip*, you control Auto Mercs who have no particular alliances. Instead, each driver and vehicle combination attempts to round up tourists, taxi them to specific "photo-op" spots in the level (indicated by a flashing dot on the map), and hang around just long enough for a photo to be taken. There are typically up to a half-dozen of these photo opportunities, usually located in close proximity to landmarks such as the Lincon Memorial in DC. This play mechanic is prevalent throughout all levels, but you still have to destroy your opponents to advance to new stages. I really like the idea of tracking down rich tourists and taking them to sweet spots across the levels while fighting off the hordes of Auto-Mercs looking to acquire my passenger. There's always a focus.

I hope to be playing a more polished product when *Rogue Trip* finalizes. Right now the levels can be seen extremely far into the distance, which is very impressive, but the frame rate is taking a major dive in the process. This game will never feel as solid or satisfying as *Vigilante 8* - this much I know already - but its unique theme has great potential.



s.c.a.r.s.

By Dave Halverson

Can Vivid's beastly vehicular combat racer devour the competition?





One of the most popular genres of the last decade, vehicular racing has spawned some classic duels as well as a few crash 'n burn victims. They come in all shapes and sizes, from the free-roaming arenas of *Twisted Metal* and *Vigilante 8*, to the open highways of the *Road Rash* series, to the twisting tracks of *Red Asphalt* and *Mario Kart*. The newest kid on the block, *S.C.A.R.S.* (Super Computer Animal Racing Simulation), will likely raise the bar on the trackbound racing type. Vivid Image begins the foray with one of the best racing engines ever seen on the PlayStation. The frame rate is fluid and unremitting, showing no viscosity breakdown among highly detailed and densely populated polygonal theme based tracks, each fraught with stomach churning dips, drops, jumps 'n bumps. If you like your races long, then you're in luck - the average lap lasts over a minute and you can set each for as many as 20 or as few as three; the perfect balance of vehicular warfare and racing ensues. Following each competition, provided you place in the top three, *SCARS* features a choice replay feature as well. Similar to *Virtua Racing's* but even more refined, you can toggle cameras and drivers and create some truly epic views, as well as study the winner's lines and techniques (unless of course, you won). Set in the year 3000, *SCARS* motif is excellently carried out. The *Moon Patrol* meets *Wild Kingdom* fusion makes for some interesting vehicle design. Each racer has its own beastly attributes with a balance between performance, grip, and armor. Peculiar deformities abound to say the least.

SCARS will be met this fall with formidable competition on all three platforms. There are a lot of alternatives in this category, so only the perfect mix of racing, combat, longevity, and graphics will make the winners circle. Too heavy on combat (see *Mario Kart 64*) and even the best laid plans can go awry. So far, *S.C.A.R.S.* shows no signs of imbalance, and judging by our previewable version, the game is very close to completion. It's evident that *S.C.A.R.S.* is being developed by gamers familiar (and probably somewhat disgruntled) with the genre. The PS version is the most advanced in terms of maxing out a given system's capabilities; however, the 3DFX version will simply melt your retinas. You'll be hard pressed to find a racer that looks, sounds, and plays this good on any format.

The lighting in S.C.A.R.S. is first-rate. At any time, day or night, on any course, you can switch your headlights on and off...



You can also choose to race with or without weapons. Vivid Image has thought of everything!





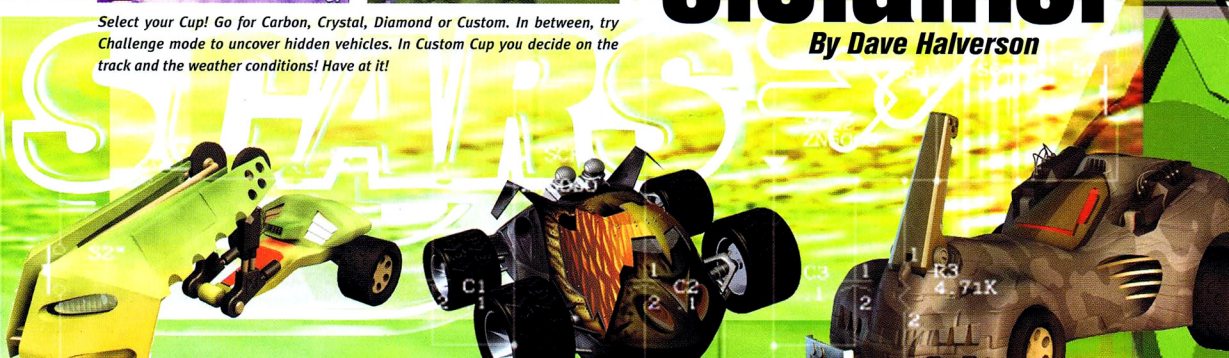




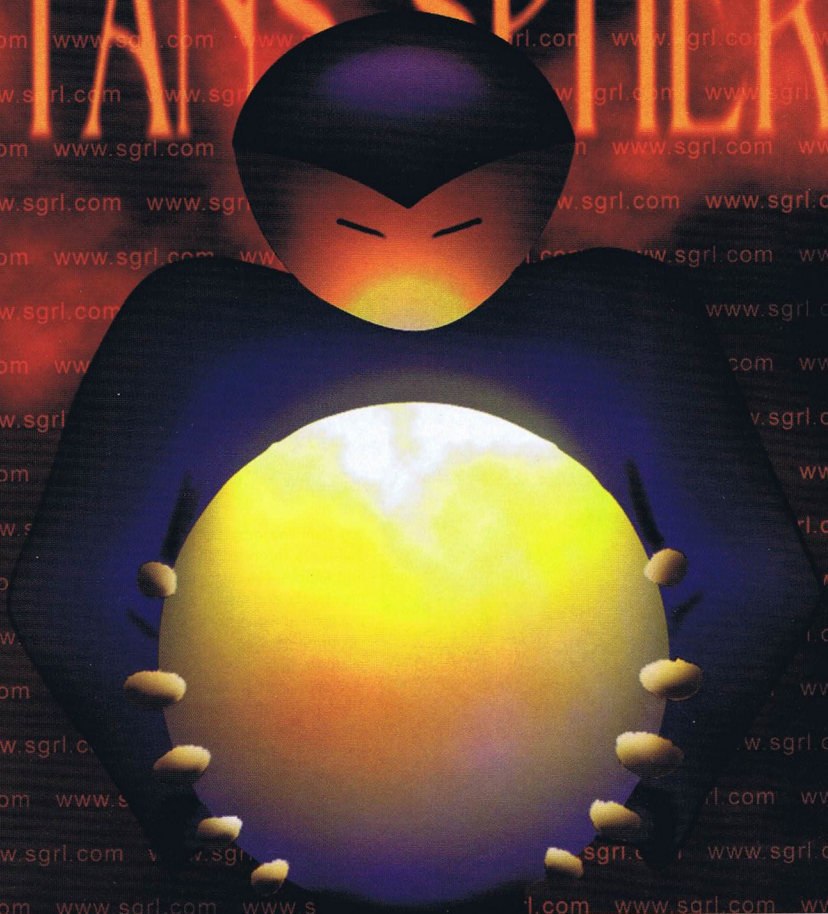




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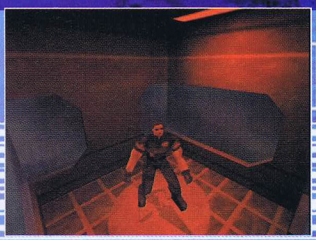
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sin

by Dave Rees

Ritual's deadly Sin has arrived!

A day that will be remembered by many FPS fans across the country, Sinday has come and gone. But was the wait worth it?





Blam! The impact of the bullet makes a distinct hole in the criminal's forehead. In an instant, his eyes become empty, gray, and lifeless. His face falls limp and is stained; blood runs across his cheeks and down his neck. He falls backward and thumps to the ground like a rag doll. The alarm is still sounding, the bank is yet to be secured, and three more thugs are running at you with machine guns smoking. You hear screams in the distance, an explosion erupts and someone cries out "Blade, where are you!" That's you, John Blade, rent-a-cop extraordinaire. You are on a mission to eradicate a bank robbery, and you are severely outnumbered, but that would never stop you from trying. After all, this isn't reality, it is *Sin*, Ritual Entertainment's upcoming first-person shooter. And, yes, it's finally playable.

On Sunday, July 26, 1998 a short demo of *Sin* was posted on the internet for anyone to download; it was a day that many PC owners will remember as "Sinday Bloody Sinday." The name is appropriate, as the short but sweet preview requires you to kill, kill some more, and then kill again. It includes two single player levels and two multiplayer maps. Although the multiplayer maps are well designed and fun to play, it appears that *Sin's* strongest quality will easily be its single player experience.

Your opponents are human and the authenticity of their actions is almost eerie - particularly when they die. Heads snap back, chests burst open, legs become charred and lacerated, and bodies toss about appropriately from location specific hits. Some enemies gurgle as they die, others moan or

The realism and graphic detail in the Sin demo is immense. Those who fear the sight of death will want to steer well clear; the depictions of death are unsettling.





A billboard (left) was once perched high above, but after sending some lead its way, it plummeted into the skylight below. A safe hidden behind a painting (below) reveals plenty of cash and two boxes of Ritual's Scourge of Armagon!



whine. Their weapons fly out of their grasp as they fall to their death. You can even strip the armor off their carcasses. Blood sprays onto walls and floors, bullets leave marks, dust sprays from the walls when hit. Walk up to an ATM machine and log on; enter the right code and you can even illegally transfer money into your own account. Walk up to a computer terminal, change security access levels and open doors, or go to a DOS prompt, run a DIR and execute programs. You can even use a pay phone if you have the right amount of change. If you shoot a billboard outside of the bank, it will crash through a skylight window and cause the room below to flood.

Your adversaries are much smarter than your average *Quake* thug because the AI in *Sin* is well advanced over any of the currently available FPS games. We're all used to walking into rooms filled with several enemies, but after playing a game for a while, it is very easy to predict how they will react and, thus, the game becomes more target practice and less thinking. *Sin's* enemies often react differently to situations. One time they will spread out, another they will come at you with brute force. They will chase after you wherever you go, even through doors.











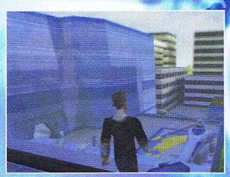


The first level of the demo requires players to man a rather large machine gun from within a helicopter and take out the enemy fortifications located outside of the bank - certainly a fresh way to start an FPS game and not exactly what one would expect. But once you successfully eradicate the gun emplacements and make your way into the bank, the enthralling level of realism and interactivity described above will consume you. But as intriguing as the demo is, it is far too short, and boy does it ever leave you hanging. I cannot recall any demo that left me this high and dry since the *Final Fantasy VII* demo. One thing is for sure: when we receive our first complete version of *Sin*, productivity for many of us will likely take a cliff dive.

Sin's multiplayer action takes the frag fest to new levels of realism!

Included with the demo are two multiplayer maps that are highly original and a blast to play!

What separates *Sin's* multiplayer deathmatch mode from its competition is its realistic environments and diverse gameplay. Can you think of a better place to snipe than an abandoned city street filled with skyscrapers? Climb to the rooftops of towering buildings, crouch down and zoom in on the avenues below, watching as other sinners battle each other. If anyone pauses for a mere second, you can pick them off with one precise blow to the skull. But *Sin* deathmatch includes specific body armor that can be worn to protect your head, chest and legs from damage. If your foes are well protected, it will take more than one direct hit to take them out. The amount of work that went into *Sin's* multiplayer mode is evident, but don't take my word for it - try it for yourself.











spyro the dragon

by Dave Halverson

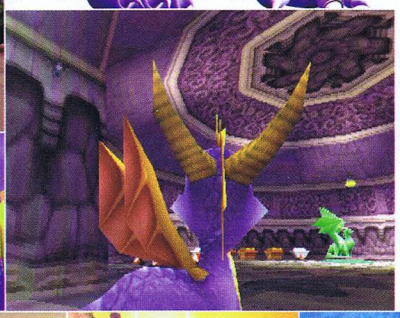
Once in awhile, for one reason or another, be it fate, the stars aligning, or whatever, two events happen simultaneously: people get truly inspired and at the same time actually get the freedom to see their inspiration through without intervention. The result is always a classic gaming experience. Such an event has transpired at Insomniac in the case of *Spyro the Dragon*. When the game of the year awards are presented, Spyro will likely waddle up to the podium more than a few times. The team at Insomniac developing *Spyro* have in some capacity worked on *Disruptor, Sonic 2, Kid Chameleon, Wild 9, Aladdin, Lion King, Hercules, Black Dawn, Treasures of the Deep, Toy Story* and *Gargoyles*, to name about half of the games to their collective credit. It's safe to say that they are an experienced crew. Together they have embarked on what will surely be the next big thing out of the Sony camp. Like RARE for Nintendo, Insomniac will join the ranks alongside Naughty Dog as Sony's big guns in America. Sure to become legendary among not just gaming circles, but all forms of entertainment, *Spyro the Dragon* grows on you (and anyone who happens to be in the room) in about ten seconds.

Banished from five dragon regions to the dragon junkyard, the freakish Gnorc-Gnasty has carried out the most evil of tasks and frozen all of the five families of dragons and turned their vast gem collections into willing minions. Not the smartest Gnorc on the planet, Gnasty did manage to miss one dragon who happened to be playing hooky on that fateful day...

Take everything you like about mythical characters like dragons and wizards and the dreamy worlds they inhabit, combine them with the best 3D engine ever displayed on the PlayStation (along with truly inspired gameplay), and you can begin to imagine how attractive a motif and game Insomniac have developed around *Spyro*. There's something about the way that this cute yet fantastical dragon goes about his business freeing frozen captives, chasing down hooded thieves and evil rogues, and gliding almost











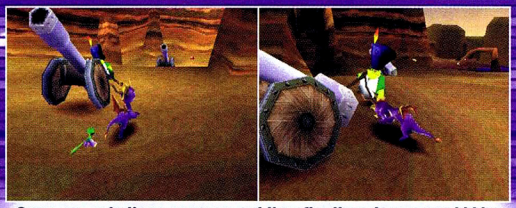








When Spyro saves a captive dragon, gameplay hints and objectives are revealed through inspired narration.



Spyro can spin these cannons and then fire them to uncover hidden gems or take out enemies from afar.



magically through brilliant gleaming skies that I just can't get enough of. I don't think I've been as instantly entertained and intrigued by an original character since *Sonic* and *Crash*. Of course, I love critters. On a charismagraph, Spyro smokes Banjo (and Kazooie) and just about any other I can think of. *Spyro* is narrated by the guy who does the Taco Bell Chihuahua (of course, in a different dialect), and the music was composed by Stewart Copeland (of the Police). Much attention was paid to the audio presentation. All of the dragons in *Spyro* speak once he frees them, and they do so with Disney-like resonance. The music is the best I've heard from an American game this year. It not only conforms to the levels, but seems to add a magical quality as well. Speaking of magic qualities, when you take flight in *StD*, if you're passionate about games, this will go directly into your book of memorable moments. The effects, too, are stellar all around, but especially during Spyro's breath of fire: Blow flames against a wall and they'll actually bank off with flying sparks and gentle smoke. The game is connected through host arenas - Artisans, Peacekeepers, Magiccrafters, Beastmakers, and Machinists - which branch out into the games actual levels. The host arenas are quite large themselves (and you can see all the way across them) but they are dwarfed by each level (of which there are 30). Almost every time you think rounding the next corner will reveal the level's end, it opens up into a whole new sector. It's really spectacular in size, and the integrity of the textures for a free-roaming PlayStation game are unprecedented.

Spyro himself is master of many moves. He can charge, breathe fire, roll over, glide, and super charge. Using the analog wand, his regular trot is cool, but you can also slow him down to a prance. The animation is beautiful. Special doesn't begin to describe *Spyro the Dragon*. Games like this will fuel the PlayStation all the way into the year 2000. Cue the music...





Some gems are easy pickins'... some require other means of procurement.





The most impressive PlayStation engine is on display. Vast environments await, for you and Spyro to explore.

A challenger for MGS? Perhaps...

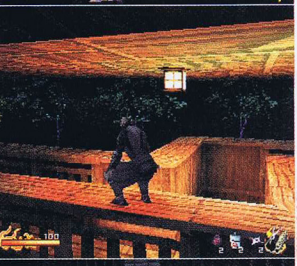
For those of you who are new to the *Tenchu* scene, this is Sony Music Entertainment's 3D stealth assassination action adventure set in feudal Japan. Starring Rikimaru, leader of the Tohinin clan of ninja, and Ayame, an orphaned lass raised in the ninja society, *Tenchu* is a seven-level journey through the shadows of towns, forests, caverns, and vast shogun fortresses.

Comparing *Tenchu* to *Metal Gear Solid* is now inevitable: Both feature a stealth-type theme. *Tenchu*, however, is more of a patient gamer's game. For instance, you might find yourself crouching at the edge of a roof for several minutes, tracking a patrolling guard. He eventually turns his back, you drop from your perch, run up silently behind him to within a breath, then slash his throat from ear to ear. Or perhaps you'll find yourself in a compromising crevice between a lava flow and a boulder. A lumbering masked guard in the distance has no idea that you're *right* there, but it doesn't matter because you can't get close enough before he sees you. The solution? Quickly drop one of your items - perhaps a bowl of food - back-flip out of the way, and then roll backwards, right back into your handy crevice. As he turns to inspect the noise, he pauses to take a bite from the dish you've left. Suddenly the poor fool is violently choking on the poisonous substances mixed into the meal! Seize the opportunity. A running pounce and you're all over the helpless poisoned guard, viscously popping his bones out of their sockets ("pop, pop!") in a half dozen different places! *MGS* will be a much better game, period, but *Tenchu* has the attractive ninja theme going for it despite many flaws.

I still believe that the *Tenchu* experience (when played correctly) is engrossing and rewarding. U.S. players should definitely play through *Tenchu* and enjoy its many positive features. We'll tell all in the review.











tenchu

By Mike Griffin

Ninja hide, seek, and slash

Through huge feudal Japan environments



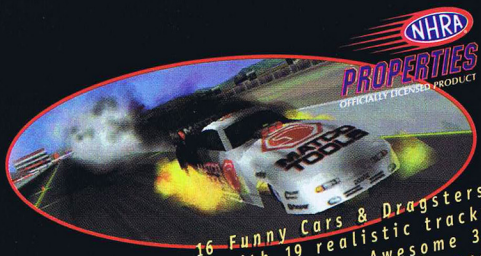




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Experience the incredible speeds and awesome combat racing of Wipeout for the first time on the Nintendo 64!

wipeout 64

By Brady Fiechter



Wipeout was wickedly fast. *Wipeout XL* was even faster. Now Psygnosis are bringing this blistering series to the Nintendo 64, and whether their ultimate goal is to make the third *Wipeout* even quicker, I say forget about it - it'll never happen.

But who cares? As exhilarating as it is to take the devilish dips and turns of *Wipeout 64*, whatever improvements are intended to be made for the final version, an increase in speed needn't even be addressed - the game is as intense as any racer possibly could be.







If the team wants to focus on improving *Wipeout 64*, it needs to work on cleaning up the horizon line that seems so ready to magically pop into view in rather large chunks of track. At least there is no distraction in this and other minor graphical hiccups, which are actually few and far between; the game is coming along beautifully. But if it is to match the consummate performance of *Wipeout XL*, every little detail should be cared for.

Psygnosis seem pleased with the progress of *Wipeout 64* and is confident that the final product will be everything we would come to expect from a game carrying the auspicious *Wipeout* branding. For once, this confidence escapes the typical bravado, throwing away the inflated talk with tangible evidence of a luminous product. The skeleton of the original *Wipeout* seems to be housing *Wipeout 64*, lending the game its desirable essence. But understand that this is not a port or casual update meant to grant Nintendo 64 owners a peak into the matchless *Wipeout* circuit; it is an entirely revamped game designed to utilize the N64 hardware: track architecture has been built from the ground up, weapons systems and vehicles have been redesigned, an impressive new soundtrack has been created.

While *Wipeout 64* is restructuring and drawing off key elements of the previous games, the most significant changes are seemingly being made through the track design. One of the standout tracks winds underwater, housed by mammoth steel beams enclosed in glass, around which fish will be placed to swim in the final version. It's an awesome environment to race in, one of six making its way into the final version. If Psygnosis manage to cultivate enough added features to compliment the track retooling, they could almost get away with calling this game *Wipeout 3*.

New to the Wipeout series is a four-player, split-screen mode



crystal dynamics preview

by Mike Hobbs

While Crystal's high-profile *Soul Reaver* is attracting a fair amount of attention and press coverage, two equally interesting games are currently in the works. *Akuji the Heartless* explores the dark world of voodoo magic and *The Unholy War* looks set to take strategy gaming to an adrenaline-fueled new high.

akuji the heartless





At least as serious in tone as *Soul Reaver*, Crystal's *Akuji the Heartless* takes 3D action/adventure into the realm of voodoo and all its mysterious powers. For a hint at the game's dark nature, look no further than the title. *Akuji* is literally heartless, having had it ripped out on his wedding day by his brother Orad's minions, no less. It seems that Akuji's imminent marriage to Kesho, the eldest daughter of the Grimaldi tribe, would create an everlasting peace. Orad thinks that peace stinks. Now heartless, you must escape hell by locating your ancestor's spirits and using their power to break through to the other side.

Played from a 3rd person perspective, *AtH* displays another good looking Crystal engine. Even in the game's early state, the environments were dripping with atmosphere and color, with moody lighting effects creating suitably dark ambiance. In fact, Crystal claim that their Vertex lighting routines actually create "voodoo atmosphere."

Through a combination of voodoo magic and hand-to-hand combo style attacks, Akuji will face 14 levels of gruesome enemies and bosses. Spells include demon summons, fire throwing, and a particularly tasty one where you teleport into the body of an enemy and explode them. This juicy entertainment is coming in November to PS and PC.

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

the unholy war

Take turn-based strategy and inject it with an overdose of fast action and you might end up with something resembling Crystal's *The Unholy War.* Taking place on a planet called Xsarra, the native Arcanes face the threat of a vicious race of cyborgs called the Teknos. As their species is in danger of dying out, they look to the resources of Xsarra to ensure their survival. This creates a so-called unholy war, the bounty of which is an entire planet.

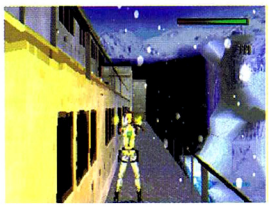
One or two players can enjoy the game's two different modes of play. Strategy takes place on a 3D hex map, with each player taking turns moving and building forces in an attempt to annihilate the other's base. Depending on which side you're on, you'll have access to flying cyborgs, futuristic tanks, insectoids, witches and sorcerers. When two units attack, the game switches to fast paced, real-time battle arenas. Here you will make use of power-ups and special attacks in lightning fast one-on-one battles. In the Mayhem mode, you play just the battle scenes until one side's forces are depleted. It reminded me of the Melee mode from *Star Control,* and as it turns out, *The Unholy War* is from the creators of *Star Con 1 & 2.* Crystal hope to ship in September.



TOMB RAIDER 3

DEVELOPER: CORE DESIGNS **PUBLISHER:** EIDOS **AVAILABLE:** NOVEMBER









Lara is somersaulting back, in style, for a third installment in the now legendary *Tomb Raider* series. Developers Core Design were nice enough to let *GR* have a sneak preview of the game (albeit in a very early stage of development) before this year's E3 in Atlanta. We were excited to find out that the game had more in common with *TR2* than *TR2* (a better sense of adventure was gained in the original), primarily dealing with puzzle-based elements and strategies rather than full-on shooting sequences. Lara now travels to new, mysterious locations, including London's underground sewer labyrinth, India, Polynesia and a possible Antarctica finale. To help her along in this most dangerous quest, the programmers decided she needed some more unique abilities, so they are including a new rolling dash attack, an all new underwater mode of transport, and a quad bike. New enemies include eagles, tigers, cobras and piranhas, and all have been designed using incredibly detailed AI routines, which enable creatures to hunt in packs, perform tactical assaults and even run away when injured. Sounds good? Well, PlayStation owners can get even more out of the deal, because *TR3* uses a brand new 3D engine, which allows the PS version to run completely hi-res and uses triangular polygons instead of square ones, thus allowing more realistic detail for ledges, chasms and pits. Set to be released in November, *TR3* could be the best in the series. We'll find out soon enough if Lara has enough charm left to keep fans satisfied.









WINBACK

DEVELOPER: KOEI **PUBLISHER:** KOEI **AVAILABLE:** WINTER



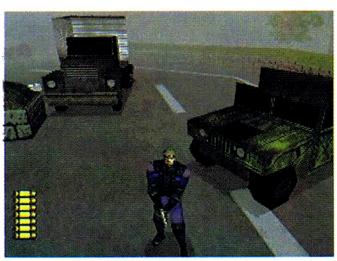


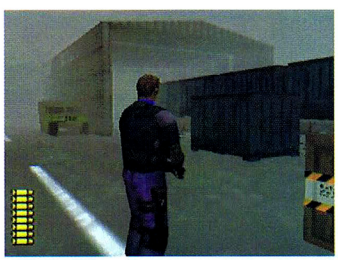


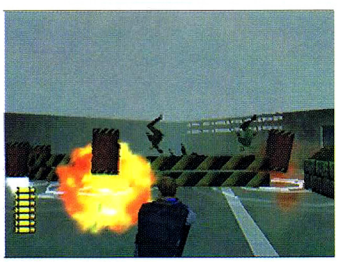


Slowly but surely, Koei are becoming known for more than just their strategy games. Last year we saw the impressive one-on-one weapon based fighter *Dynasty Warriors*. Then in Japan, the less successful, though still interesting, adventure game *Enigma* proved that they at least had the wherewithal to branch out even further. Now, for their first N64 game, they reach even further, with something in the making that bears a passing resemblance to that frothing game orgy that is *Metal Gear Solid*.

In *WinBack*, you play the part of Jean-Luc Cougar, a member of S.C.A.T. And no, it's not what you're thinking. It's "Strategic Covert Actions Team," and their mission is to handle incredibly volatile situations with stealth and cunning. In this particular case, that volatile situation revolves around an incredibly powerful orbiting laser and its hidden control center. Naturally, this new weapon falls into the wrong hands - a terrorist group calling themselves the Crying Lions. Playing from a third-person perspective, Jean-Luc will supposedly have over 350 unique actions at his disposal, including the ever popular sniper sight. Like *Metal Gear* and *Goldeneye*, stealth will play a part in the game, though just how big is unknown at this time. If all goes well, maybe N64 owners won't feel left out of the tactical espionage craze.





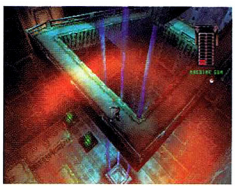


APOCALYPSE

DEVELOPER: NEVER SOFT PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION AVAILABLE: WINTER



ONE might say it's a rebirth. ONE might say it's a new direction. ONE might even say that it's a rip-off. It's the redesigned *Apocalypse*, and it looks, plays, and sounds a whole lot like ASC's spectacular action shooter *ONE*. In fact, take away *ONE's* innovative Rage Meter system, its consistent frame rate, massive explosions, and wildly original boss sequences, and you have Activision's *Apocalypse*. Starring Bruce Willis, the project was recently overhauled by Neversoft using their PS *MDK* engine. Apparently Bruce is "very pleased with the new direction." As mentioned, *Apocalypse* has one obvious shortcoming: chug. Taking advantage of the modified *MDK* engine, *Apocalypse's* environments are usually gargantuan in scope and complexity; however, the frame rate chugs heinously at times. Therefore, perks like lighting, giant structures, and manic firepower - effects that are invaluable to a game like this - are ruined by disappointing game speeds. This is more than likely due to the barrage of explosions and pyrotechnics on display, which are far more prevalent and intense than in *MDK*. I pray that Neversoft optimize the engine before release. The low frame rate is a big deal, right? Well, yeah, but *Apocalypse* is a decent shooter otherwise. The control system is pure *Smash T.V.* (up, down, left, right firing with the buttons or right analog stick), the special weapons are pretty cool, and the level design is mildly amusing. I would liken *Apocalypse* to a seriously textured *Robotron X* with themes and levels. It won't beat *ONE*, but it will be an above average shooter.





ARMORED CORE: Project Phantasma

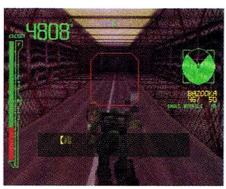
DEVELOPER: FROM SOFTWARE PUBLISHER: ASCII AVAILABLE: FALL





When *Armored Core* was first released in Japan last year, it was an impressive technical achievement. The concept of "go anywhere 3D environments" on the PlayStation was still early, and though the textures and polygon seams were a bit rough around the edges, the intense battles and overall sensation of running and flying at high speeds through an endless 3D world were convincing enough to abolish any qualms. Additionally, the missions were highly creative, requiring players to use their brains as well as their quick reflexes. With *Armored Core: Project Phantasma*, ASCII is bringing more of the same gameplay with a host of new missions to conquer. But will that be enough?

While many gamers may initially see *Armored Core: Project Phantasma* as a sequel to the original, after playing it for just a few minutes one cannot help but realize that it is a mere extension. Of course, that is nowhere close to being a negative statement, as the original was a superb mech-action game with vastly deep gameplay and features. Being an update to a previous game, one cannot expect much originality, especially in the game's presentation: The graphics engine, mission screens, interface, and mechs are identical to the original game. But the 17 new missions are all highly original, which will likely make the game intriguing, at least for fans of *Armored Core*.



DESTREGA

DEVELOPER: OMEGA FORCE PUBLISHER: KOEI AVAILABLE: WINTER



Last year, many people were shocked by Koei's surprisingly advanced 3D fighter, *Dynasty Warriors*. It looked good, it was extremely playable, and the CG and character design were very appealing. The talented development team behind *DW*, Omega Force, is preparing yet another strong 3D fighting contender: *Destrega*. Capturing the best elements of *Bushido Blade 2*, *Psychic Force*, and traditional hand to hand 3D fighting games, *Destrega* appears to be a hyper original addition to the genre. Two fighters are able to wander through vast 3D environments while engaging in screen-filling long range missile combat or dedicated hand-to-hand melee fighting. Unlike *Bushido Blade 2*, however, *Destrega* will focus on long range attacks using fireballs, streaking energy arrows, and various other forms of psychic and magic weaponry. The environments will have strategically placed landmarks to use as cover or bases from which to launch punishing well-placed attacks. *Destrega* will offer 12 unique characters and environments, an involving story mode, and five additional types of battle modes. Also, like most PS games of late, it will fully support the DualShock controller with analog stick play and those funky reactive vibrations.







HYPE: The Time Quest

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: UBISOFT AVAILABLE: WINTER





Who would have ever imagined that there would be anticipation for a Playmobil game? Normally, there would be more excitement for... well, just about anything, but UbiSoft's dedication to an action oriented style of gameplay and accelerated graphics have taken cynics by surprise. The first in the Playmobil Action Games series, *Hype: The Time Quest* takes players into the Middle Ages of the Playmobil reality. Taking on the role of Hype, an exiled knight, you'll battle across time in a quest for the Black Knight, the evil guy who originally expelled you from the kingdom. A cast of over 50 characters will be encountered within the free-roaming 3D fantasy environment, and Hype will be able to cast spells, fly on the backs of dragons, and engage in puzzle solving and role playing.

On UbiSoft's website, Alan Tascan, Vice President of Special Projects had this to say: "With the extensive Playmobil environments, including the popular castle, a lively cast of characters including magicians, sorcerers and dragons, and activities such as tournaments and joustings, we're predicting *Hype: The Time Quest* is going to be one hot game." Currently on schedule for a first quarter 1999 release on PC and N64, *Playmobil* may find a whole new generation of fans.





SMALL SOLDIERS

DEVELOPER: DREAMWORKS PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS AVAILABLE: FALL



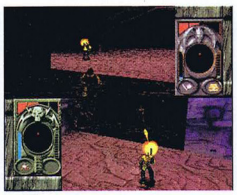
A movie that features a cast of little CG characters seems ripe for the old game treatment, and Dreamworks' *Small Soldiers* is making that predictable trek to a PlayStation near you. Though our preview disc had the nasty habit of crashing upon completing level one, it's clear that the game has little to do with the film. Well, at least I don't remember any scenes where the Gorgonites were running around through little dungeons.

Control at this early stage is sluggish, and I fear this may never be corrected, for this game's a background turner. When you press left, you basically stay in the same place while the background rotates around you. It's practically impossible to get a quick control response this way. However, your character's strafing action works well enough at this point, allowing for good enemy shooting.

If Dreamworks can seriously tighten up the control, the game's level structure and two player deathmatch modes may prove to be a great deal of fun. If not, *Small Soldiers* could end up as *Lost World* did - a technically competent, well intentioned license that unfortunately isn't any fun to play. We'll keep you abreast of *Small Soldiers*' development. >

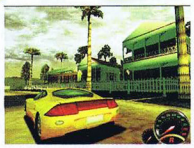






SPEED BUSTERS

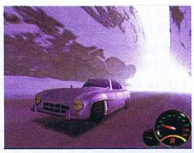
DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: UBISOFT AVAILABLE: FALL



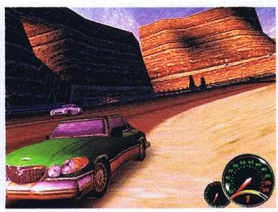
Ubi Soft's seemingly abrupt rise to premier 3D developer status should continue with *Speed Busters*, their interpretation of high speed vehicular action said to make your muscles vibrate. Six different real-world locations feature desert sand, slippery mountain curves, and harrowing city streets. Players will be rewarded for driving as fast as humanly possible and, according to Ubi Soft, this is no sissy simulator game. Using money from won races will allow you to customize your racing machine.

Four different game modes will greet the player: arcade, championship, multiplayer and online. And, supposedly, *Speed Busters* will contain a PC first - a 3D cockpit. What this exactly means is unclear at this time. It'll probably allow you to watch yourself operating all the controls in real time. The car's exterior will show damage with scratches, bumps, and even parts that fall off.

"Our goal was to create a sensory overload racing game that locks and loads the player into a stimulating world of fast track environments, where skill and heart-pounding original rock sound tracks drive the game. When gamers finish with *Speed Busters*, every muscle should be vibrating," said Yves Guillemot, president of Ubi Soft. "And just to keep things interesting, we've added touches of humor, pop culture references and plenty surprises." *Speed Busters* is coming in October for PC. >

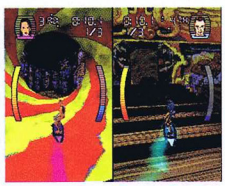






STREAK

DEVELOPER: SINGLETRAC PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: FALL



Attempting to put a new spin on the popular snowboarding genre, SingleTrac's *Streak* puts the rider atop a hightech board called a GEMBlade. GEM, of course, stands for "Graviton-Electromagnetic" and it allows these boards to counteract the forces of gravity and float. This forms the basis of a new, highly secret underground sport called "Streaking." And no, it has nothing to do with Ray Stevens.

Freed from the constraints of gravity and surface, the racing action in *Streak* will take place in all manner of environments, from dank sewers and grungy junkyards to dilapidated carnivals and seething industrial factories. Our early preview version had only a few of these on hand, and what was there was in serious need of visual tweaking. Impressive, though, were the dynamic features of each environment, with moving walls and elements of the scenery that could be knocked down.

Though it was difficult to notice in our rough preview copy, *Streak* apparently boasts (or will boast) a physics engine that will "far transcend anything currently on the market." It takes into account mass, inertia, angular momentum, friction, and velocity. Whether this is just a bunch of hyperbole or a genuine breakthrough in physics modeling can only be determined after looking at a final game. >







T'AI FU

DEVELOPER: DREAMWORKS PUBLISHER ACTIVISION AVAILABLE: FALL



A lot of R&D went into Dreamworks' *Lost World* engine, so it's no surprise seeing it in action once again. This time it powers an original game called *T'ai Fu*. Set in ancient China, you play as a martial artist tiger out to destroy the evil Dragon Master and restore the natural balance to the land. Featuring over 100 different character movements and 20 levels of gameplay, *T'ai Fu* claims to be the first game to combine free-roaming action with fighting and adventure.



Utilizing the intriguing Morph-X technology to handle the character animation, *T'ai* should boast some good looking movement. In theory, Morph-X is also supposed to enhance control response by giving the player the ability to interrupt animation. Unfortunately, it's way too early to tell just how good the final control might be, but combos come out easily enough and the Chi moves are full of flashy effects.

Considering the game's current level of completion, it's difficult to say whether *T'ai Fu's* mix of fighting and limited free-roaming movement will work. But this much is certain: Dreamworks need to pay special attention to the control, for it's where all their other efforts have faltered. >





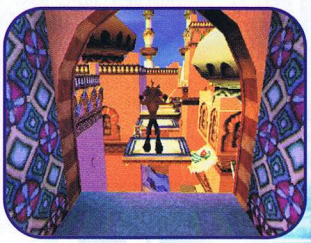


With his trademark smirk, widely stretched eyes and thick brows, a quizzical bright orange bandicoot is sauntering down a sinuous path. As you may have already guessed, the vermin in question is none other than the renowned Crash Bandicoot, but there is something different here. The terrain before him, beside him and behind him is not hidden behind trees, bushes, walls, buildings, or even fog. It is an open countryside, a sprawling Arabian city, a deep coral reef, a brightly illuminated futuristic metropolis, a dangerous Egyptian tomb, a wide-open ocean and a partly-cloudy sky. And within some of these environments is a much-desired breakthrough in technology for the *Crash* series, the ability to roam about freely. The game in question is Naughty Dog's *Crash 3: Warped*.









crash bandicoot 3 warped

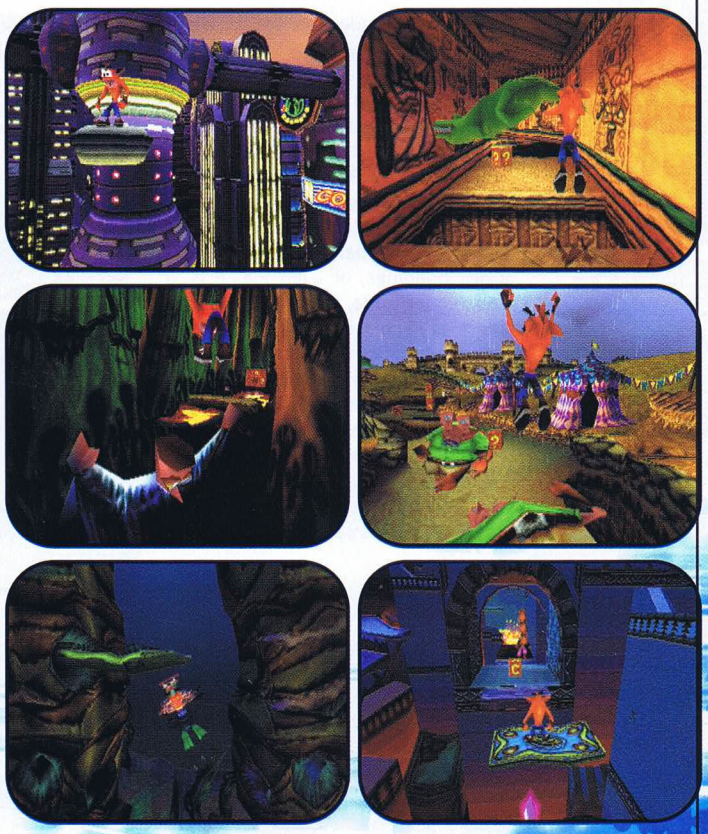
by Dave Rees



crash 3 warpe

Crash 1 and *Crash 2* both took place across similar territory, but with the help of some innovative technology, most of the worlds in *Crash 3* are all visually fresh. Jason Rubin, the mastermind behind *Crash*, explains Naughty Dog's goal for *Crash's* next chapter: "We wanted to change the backgrounds of *Crash* so that they were obviously different. After *Crash 1* and *Crash 2*, the only way to tell the difference was whether you were unfamiliar with the environment or if it looked similar but was a little more detailed, then it would be a *Crash 2* level. In *Crash 3* we want people to look at a level and say, 'hey, now that's got to be *Crash 3*'."

That is exactly what Naughty Dog have done. *Crash 3* still looks remarkably beautiful for a PlayStation game, visually surpassing everything other than its own predecessors. The colors are still incredibly vibrant, the textures are meticulously detailed, and the frame rate is better than ever. But for reasons stemming back to the game's plot (Crash travels through time), many of the environments he encounters are hardly recognizable. The free-roaming engines in *Crash 3* (the Jet Ski engine and the flying engine) are totally different from previous *Crash* levels: they don't look or play like any of the previous environments and the fact that the camera can follow you in 360 degrees provides a totally new experience. The millions of *Crash* fans across the globe will surely be ecstatic with the results.



A diverse and immensely fun set of craft...

Move about freely as your soar through the sky and skim the ocean!

Crash 3: Warped features wonderfully original vehicles that breathe new life into Crash's world.



To aid him in his voyages, Crash has plenty of new craft this time around: a undeniably cute tiger, jet ski, submarine, baby T-Rex, motorcycle, and plane to be exact. And for the first time, Crash will have a playable partner: his sister Coco who first appeared in Crash 2.

CRASH BANDICOOT 3



You cannot help but think of Wave Race when you first experience the Jets Ski levels in Crash. This isn't a flat inanimate plane - it is water. A ton of polygonal waves undulate and ripple in a way never before seen on PlayStation.

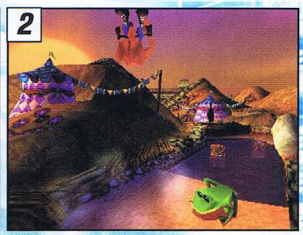


But just because Crash's surroundings will be drastically different from what we have previously experienced doesn't mean that he's up against a new adversary. Cortex is back again, but this time there is a greater evil. Aku Aku, the witchdoctor responsible for the mask that flies around and protects Crash, has a twin brother, Uka Uka. Just as Aku Aku's mask shields Crash, Uka Uka's strengthens Cortex. It has its own spirit but when Cortex is wearing it, the mask is "Cortex powered" and your nemesis gains extra strength.

While *Crash 3* retains the crystals and gems from the previous games, it also adds a new item into the mix: the relic. Once you have collected a crystal from a level, a time box appears, which, when broken, sets off a timer. With the clock ticking, your objective is to get through the level as quickly as possible. If you beat the best time, initially owned by the boss of the warp area you are in, you will receive your first relic. Jason explains the relic system in detail: "There are three levels of relics: Bronze, Gold, and Platinum. Bronze is going to be the one you need to get a relic and gain a percentage for completing the game. Gold is the one you need to say 'I'm better than even bronze.' Platinum is the best score that anyone in the Sony testing division, or at Naughty Dog, or any of the editors have gotten during the beta testing of *Crash*. If you beat the Platinum, you know you're good. If you get all 28 Platinum relics, you know you're probably the best on the planet."

It is hard to believe that any game of such rare visual beauty could ever receive criticism. Evidently *Crash 3* will once again introduce cutting-edge technology to the PlayStation, but the playing experience does not diverge from previous *Crash* games enough to warrant it a revolutionary mark. But then again, *Crash 1* and *Crash 2* are still topping the charts. Obviously, there is something that people will want to return to, but Naughty Dog also want *Crash 3* to be a new experience. For them, that meant some sort of new technology. For us, that means another greatly improved *Crash* adventure.











As Crash 2 did, Crash 3 takes the number of moves to a higher level. Stunts such as the super belly flop (A), a more powerful version of the belly flop); the double jump (B), which allows Crash to jump far higher, the super tornado (C) allows Crash to spin for a few seconds; the ability to run (D); and a laser-sighted Bazooka (E), which you will need to beat Cortex. You'll need to go back to previous levels and use your special moves to complete tasks that were previously unattainable.

Square's magnum opus continues...

A wide angle window into a mature, passionate tale of humanity...

FINAL FANTASY VIII

By Dave Rees

It's only a demo. Just a demo disc included with the Japanese version of Square's *Brave Fencer Musashiden*. I really should be playing *Brave Fencer*, not this mere one-hour long demo. That is what I tried to tell myself again and again while playing the preview of *Final Fantasy VIII*. But it didn't stop the hair on my arms from sticking straight up as I gazed at the beautiful CG intro, witnessed the brilliant battle sequences, relished in the wonderfully detailed pre-rendered backgrounds and tensed as a quadruped mechanical beast charged after Squall Leonhart through city streets, across a beach and back into the aquatic craft that he first arrived on. Yes, the *FFVIII* demo is a mere spec of what is to come, but it is undeniably a remarkable experience. And I expected that to be the case.

What is surprising is how much the *Final Fantasy* series has matured. Seriously, there is nothing at all cute about this game. The polygonal characters are very profound and correctly proportioned, facial expressions reveal passion and intellect, and the animation is representational of reality – resulting in character personae that are clearly defined through both visual expression and actions, not just through dialogue. This transfiguration of visual style and tonality is an important evolution for Square, destined to push the console RPG genre closer than ever to older audiences. But even so, the demo also makes it evident that the final game will remain well rooted to its foundation.



The battle system, spells, and story all reflect the marvelous appeal of Square's undying *FF* series. Stunning limit breaks, magnificent summon spells (an ability now called Guardian Force), and a familiar list of items are all back. The game's music is again composed by Nobuo Uematsu and retains the same illustrious orchestral quality of previous *FF* games. But *FFVIII* is once again in a different place, at a different time, and debuts a host of fresh characters to act out a new, more passionate plot line. Experiencing the demo reveals one certainty, Square's eighth *Final Fantasy* adventure is going to be another masterpiece of gaming, and we will all experience the same dramatic anticipation until it is finally released in Japan later this year - if it stays true to schedule, that is.









Witness the boundless limit breaks of FFVIII!

Zell vaults into the air and charges at the enemy with undeniable force!











Battle System

The battle system employed by *FFVIII* is similar to *FFVII*'s, but it also introduces several new concepts. The time based active battle system is well intact, as each character must wait his turn based on a meter that fills over time. Graphically, the attack sequences remain spectacular to watch. As in *FFVII*, the camera often pans in on the action at just the right moment, adding an incredible cinematic sense to the action. The detail in the textures is also very impressive, once again providing a more authentic sense of realism over the goraud-shaded look of the original. With no concept of materia in *FFVIII*, the menu system in the demo seems less complicated than *FFVII*'s, as it does not appear to ever change. There are four commands for each character: Squall and Zell both have Attack, Magic, Draw and Item commands. Rinoa cannot use Draw spells but instead uses the awe-inspiring Guardian Force ability.



Attack

A normal attack utilizing whatever weapon currently employed. The demo hints at a system of combo attacks that can be used with various weapons. When Squall attacks with his GunBlade, pressing the R1 button just as he strikes causes an extra powerful blow and the dual shock pad to rumble. The damage is considerably more extensive than a normal hit.



Magic

The magic system in FFVIII departs from most other RPG's in that it does not depend on MP that can be replenished. Each spell can be cast once and is thus expelled. Thus, magic must be stockpiled and used strategically. It is likely that spells will be purchasable or found hidden throughout the game, but it is the draw technique that seems to be the most effective avenue for learning new abilities.

Guardian Force



The most powerful magic in FFVIII is dual shock compatible and essentially replaces the Summon spells from past FF games. Only one is available in the demo, Leviathan, and it is very impressive to watch. But it does take about 45 seconds to execute, so it should not be used when time is the essence. When cast, the spell must charge before it actually executes, during which any damage received by the caster will be reflected onto the Guardian Force. In the demo, only one character, Rinoa Heartilly, has the ability to use the Guardian Force spells. But expect that to change in the final version.

Draw

Draw allows a character to steal magic spells, whether new or already employed. When selecting the command, players can pick the enemy they want to draw magic from, select which magic they want to take, and then choose whether they want to use it immediately against the enemy or keep it for later. Like the Enemy Skill materia in FFVII, this will also allow players to learn new spells.



Limit Attacks

When Squall or Zell are badly hurt or continually attacked, they can utilize a special attack similar to FFVII's limit breaks. But the immense power and graphic depiction goes well beyond anything seen before. With the GunBlade, Squall's limit break is interactive: When executed, a bar representing the progress of the attack is presented with several triangular markers that depict key attack points. If players hit R1 as the meter reaches these markers, the bar changes color and the impact intensifies. Tougher opponents will have to face limit attacks that are more powerful and thus suffer more damage.



The Characters

SQUALL LEONHEART



Sex: Male
Age: 17
Height: 177 cm
Weapon: GunBlade

Final Fantasy VIII's protagonist, Squall is inquisitive, relatively free of worry and perhaps just a bit too confident. He is currently a member of The Garden, a military training school for the youth, but he is aspiring to join the elite branch SeeD, an aggressive faction of superior fighters that is responsible for dissipating volatile situations as they erupt. Squall is armed with the impressive Gunblade, a bizarre sword that is said to have incredible powers.

ZELL DINCHT



Sex: Male
Age: 17
Height: 168 cm
Weapon: Fist Gauntlets

Signified by an eccentric tattoo along his left cheek, Zell is just as confident as Squall but is apparently reluctant to disobey orders. He tends to lose his temper quite often and shows it in his actions; sometimes he'll punch the ground when highly annoyed. Highly skilled at hand-to-hand combat, his powerful punch is greatly augmented by his weapon of choice: the Fist Gauntlets.

RINOA HEARTILLY



Sex: Female
Age: 17
Height: 163 cm
Weapon: Bladed Ring

Mysterious and curiously quiet, Rinoa possesses the Guardian Force ability throughout the demo. She doesn't so much as utter a word unless spoken to, but her long list of magic spells and healing abilities make her essential to completing the demo. Like Yuffie from FFVII, she throws a boomerang-like weapon in battle, the Bladed Ring. Unlike Squall and Zell, Rinoa does not have a limit attack, but makes up for it with the ability to summon the mighty Leviathan.

SEIFER ALMASY



Sex: Male
Age: 18
Height: 188 cm
Weapon: Broad Sword

Seifer tends to take the meaning of competitiveness to a new high. He is impetuous, impudent, and very impatient. His thirst for combat is only surpassed by his unduly high self-esteem. While he is not a member your party, he plays a key role in your mission and was apparently responsible for Squall's military training. It is likely that Seifer will join your party sometime later in the actual game. Notice the scar across his face; it is curiously similar to the marking that Squall wears.

LAGUNA LOIRE



Sex: Male
Age: 27
Height: 181 cm
Occupation: Journalist

A man of passion and devoutness, Laguna was mysteriously missing from the demo. Apparently, Laguna was once a soldier and attended The Garden, but has since retired to become a journalist. It has been said that FFVIII may have cross-dimensional travel. Perhaps Laguna is a character from one the alternate dimensions in the world of FFVIII. Regardless, we expect him to play a major role in the FFVIII saga.

A Test of Strength, Courage and Discipline

As Squall contemplates his next move, he dreams of being a member of the elite SeeD division

But he has much more to face than Galvadian soldiers...

Only the gifted, dexterous and fearless can join the SeeD Special Forces division, but that doesn't matter to Squall Leonhart. He is bright, bold and far too ambitious to settle for anything less. A member of The Garden, a co-ed military school for children to young adults, he opted to take the trying SeeD entrance exam and seek a life of continuous danger. His big test is about to begin. Along with compatriots, Zell and Rinoa, his mission is to help secure the central plaza of a nearby coastal town currently under siege by the Galvadian army. As he approaches the remote land, Squall is confident he will gain his degree - perhaps too confident. What lies ahead is far more terrifying than what he ever could have imagined.



Squall, Zell, and Rinoa rendezvous with Seifer just as they arrive on the beach. Seifer's hot head and desire to fight is immediately apparent, and so is Squall's inexperience as he tends to ask too many questions. As the four Garden members make their way towards the plaza, they encounter relatively weak Galvadian Soldiers.

Personalities clash, conflicts arise, and a canine saves your life...

Once you make it to the plaza, you will encounter an intricately animated golden retriever, and it is evident that Seifer hates dogs as he kicks the pup several times while it begs for his attention. The dog ends up saving your party as he warns you of approaching soldiers, giving your party time to duck out of view as they march by.





Against orders and much to Zell's dismay, Seifer convinces Squall to follow the Galvadian Soldiers and secure the EM Tower on a nearby mountain peak. This is where you learn that Squall received training from Seifer and has a very high opinion of his fighting skills. As your party makes its way up the mountain, the adversaries become much more threatening.

The Enemies

GALVADIA SOLDIER



Soldiers of the Galvadian Army are your first and easiest foes in the demo. They are easily eradicated with normal attacks; however, they make a good source of nourishment for your inventory of magic abilities. Use your Draw commands to absorb some spells first, then go for the kill.

HP: 105	MAGIC: 12
ATTACK: 20	MAGIC DEF.: 1
DEFENSE: 5	AGILITY: 20
DROP ITEM: Potion x 1	
DRAWN SPELLS: Fire, Cure	

ANGULAR SNAKE



When attacking Angular Snake with a normal hit, it is likely that you will receive a counter attack. Magic attacks are highly recommended, but using your draw command with at least one party member is highly recommended.

HP: 400	MAGIC: 18
ATTACK: 20	MAGIC DEF.: 2
DEFENSE: 10	AGILITY: 25
DROP ITEM: Tail of Phoenix x 1	
DRAWN SPELLS: Thunder, Blizzard	

BUEL



Looking more like a pinwheel than a vicious beast, Buel spins his way into your path. But beneath the motion blur is a rancid winged serpent with some nasty spells. But with a mere 60 HP, he is relatively easy to tame.

HP: 60	MAGIC: 21
ATTACK: 14	MAGIC DEF.: 24
DEFENSE: 6	AGILITY: 40
DROP ITEM: Potion x 1	
DRAWN SPELLS: Fire, Thunder, Blizzard	

MESMERIZE



To beat Mesmerize, break his horn with normal attacks first. Doing so will invalidate his primary weapon and leave him defenseless. If you want to finish the fight quickly, attack him with magic, but try drawing a few Double spells first.

HP: 210	MAGIC: 20
ATTACK: 16	MAGIC DEF.: 4
DEFENSE: 13	AGILITY: 50
DROP ITEM: Tail of Phoenix x 1	
DRAWN SPELLS: Fire, Cure, Double	

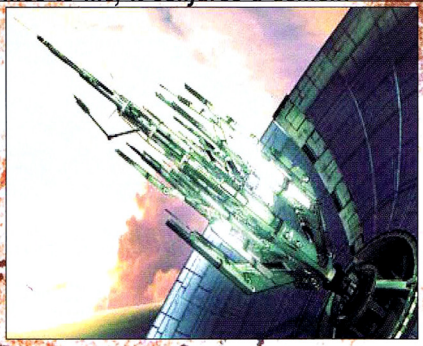
Against all orders, you travel to a mysterious tower... As the column comes to life, it conjures a demon!

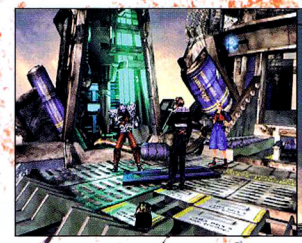


Upon reaching the tower, your party rides an elevator to the top where you meet Biggs and Wedge for the first time. It is apparent that they are trying to fix the tower as it seems to be short-circuiting. A CG sequence is then played out that depicts the tower coming to life after it is fixed.

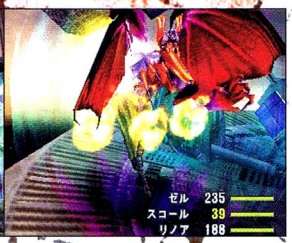








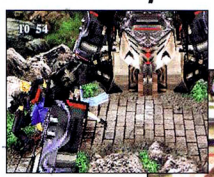




An altercation then occurs between Biggs and Seifer: Seifer uses his sword to pick up Bigg's computer and throws it to the ground, and a battle ensues. But Biggs and Wedge are the least of your party's troubles as the first boss, Elviore, enters the scene.

A desperate dive is your last hope for survival!

After defeating Elviore, a soldier of Dollet then arrives to inform you that your squadron will be evacuating the area in 15 minutes. As you begin to retrace your steps, a second boss, X-ATM092, begins to pursue you as the clock ticks away. When battling, the boss will become weak and drop to the ground giving your party time to turn and run. Between battles, keep running and don't look back. If you are quick enough, you will only have to fight the boss three times before Sqall's glorious escape sequence ensues. If you don't make it before 15 minutes time, it is game over.







WEDGE



While Biggs attempts to fix the EM tower, Wedge warns him of a "beast-like shadow" that was seen near the upper levels of the tower. Wedge joins Biggs in a battle against your party, but is essentially no help when Elviore appears.

HP: 600	MAGIC: 12
ATTACK: 23	MAGIC DEF.: 1
DEFENSE: 8	AGILITY: 50
DROP ITEM: Potion x 1	
DRAWN SPELLS: Fire, Blizzard	

BIGGS



Assigned to fix the tower, Biggs reluctantly complies but finds himself in an unexpected struggle as you cross paths with him at the tower's crest. As Elviore appears, Biggs and Wedge are whisked by the beast's tornadic blizzard spell.

HP: 210	MAGIC: 12
ATTACK: 26	MAGIC DEF.: 4
DEFENSE: 10	AGILITY: 50
DROP ITEM: Potion x 1	
DRAWN SPELLS: Thunder, Cure, Double	

ELVIORE



A demonic winged beast that descends upon your battle with Biggs and Wedge; Elviore is a force to reckon with. Surprisingly, he is weak against normal attacks. Try to use Squall's GunBlade combo attack and have plenty of Cure spells ready.

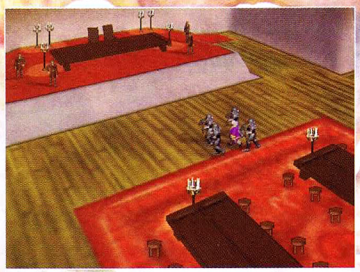
HP: ?	MAGIC: 22
ATTACK: 27	MAGIC DEF.: 11
DEFENSE: 1	AGILITY: 50
DROP ITEM: Tail of Phoenix x 1	
DRAWN SPELLS: Fire, Blizzard, Cure	

X-ATM092



X-ATM092 is virtually unstoppable by your party. After absorbing several attacks, it will lower to the ground in a weakened state. After seeing the message "Let's beat it!", press the R2 and L2 buttons simultaneously and keep running.

HP: ?	MAGIC: 19
ATTACK: 20	MAGIC DEF.: 18
DEFENSE: 11	AGILITY: 30
DROP ITEM: Tail of Phoenix x 1	
DRAWN SPELLS: Fire, Thunder, Cure	





The bloodbath continues in Bungie's sequel to 1997's RTS game of the year!

Shown off to much of the press for the first time at E3 '97, *Myth* turned many heads and drew huge crowds. Dwarves with attitudes waddled through blood-soaked battlefields shouting "Make a hole!" and tossing molotov cocktails, crazed Scottish swordsman clashed in grand fashion, rotting zombies roared and self-destructed in a wet shower of poisonous pulp, heads rolled, limbs flew, guts spewed, and blood poured. The environments were stunningly depicted in 3D, the view was isometric, and the game looked like tremendous fun. Was this another real time strategy title? Was it an action title? One thing was for sure: it was something fresh and highly entertaining.

The game was released later that year and has since enjoyed a healthy collection of accolades and awards, but now Bungie are preparing *Myth II: SoulBlighter*, and they plan on taking the experience to a level that will surely please their existing fans, but also expand upon the game's current popularity. I spent a day at Bungie's San Jose studios and chatted with Doug Zartman, their veteran Director of Publicity, about the sequel.



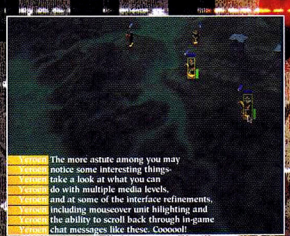

Much has changed since the original game ended. Doug delineates the continuing saga: "Essentially *Myth II* starts about 60 years after you've thrown Balor's head into the great devoid, and as you saw, SoulBlighter took off in a swarm of crows. After Balor died, most of the other Fallen Lords fell apart, they were all under his power, and with him dead they scattered. Most of them were hunted down by Alric and his armies, although not quite all of them. *SoulBlighter* basically hid out and bided his time looking for some opportunity to come back and try to finish the work of destroying all life and ruling over the devastated lands. At the beginning of *SoulBlighter*, basically the kingdom is at peace, Alric is king and all of the armies have stood down. Alric starts getting reports of disturbing events happening in certain fringes of the kingdom and some of the outlying villages, and reports of grave robberies and brigands coming out of nowhere and attacking villages. So the player is sent out in the first two levels to investigate." But as one would expect, the changes go well beyond a new storyline. Bungie wanted to make the game more accessible, more immersing and more fun.

The improvements to *Myth's* graphics engine are subtle yet very incisive. Bungie wanted to submerge the player in a world that was more alive and filled with animation and ambience. Birds will fly by and chirp, chickens will cluck and waddle about, fish splash their way through water, and a pack of wolves might stumble upon your army now and then – and attack. There will even be context sensitive BGM. Polygonal structures can now be altered during gameplay, and the overall frames of animation have been doubled. But one of Bungie's more impor-

The atmosphere of Myth: The Fallen Lords was certainly strong, but it pales in comparison to the sequel. With several alternate environments that will require exceptional tactical abilities to defeat, Myth II should continue to keep fans of the original on their toes.

myth2:soulblighter

by Dave Rees





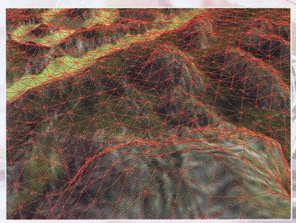

tant goals was to make *Myth II* much easier to play. You'll be able to pan right and left or rotate the play field with the mouse. A button panel located at the bottom of the screen is designed specifically to improve the accessibility of most of the commands necessary for playing the game. For the many people that had problems with gesture clicking, you can hold down the right mouse button and easily assign an orientation to a group of units. Bungie.net, an online service used for internet multiplayer *Myth* games, is doing very well, and Bungie is planning to enhance the multiplayer experience by including a variety of new locations, adding in-game alliances, and increasing the number of game objectives. One game type that sounds outrageously fun is Choke the Chicken, which will require players to protect a flock of chickens. We can only imagine the tasty mix of blood, guts and feathers that will ensue.

SoulBlighter Continues His Wrath

Unlike the original Myth, SoulBlighter (depicted below) has recruited a whole host of both the living and the undead to facilitate his cause. Although the actual number of levels will remain roughly identical to the original, defeating your archnemesis will surely be a bigger challenge.

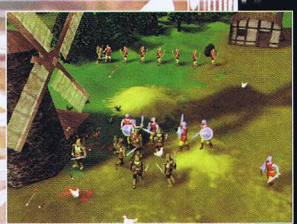
The Fallen Lords were defeated... ...but not quite destroyed

The polygonal worlds of Myth II are much more expansive and detailed than those of the original. With a wide array of surroundings and animated structures like the windmill below, we'll be treated to plenty of graphical realism.









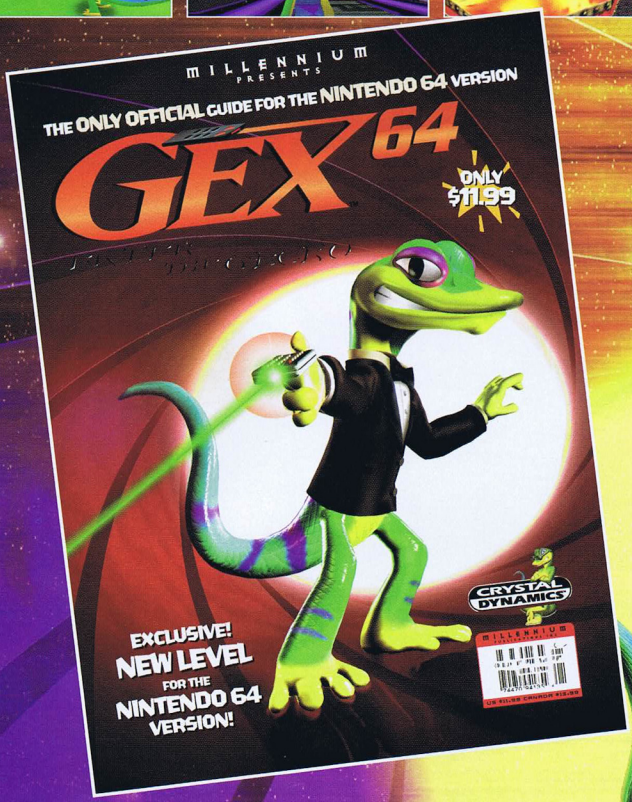
All Images and artwork © 1998 Bungie, Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Who's the Amphibian with all the action?













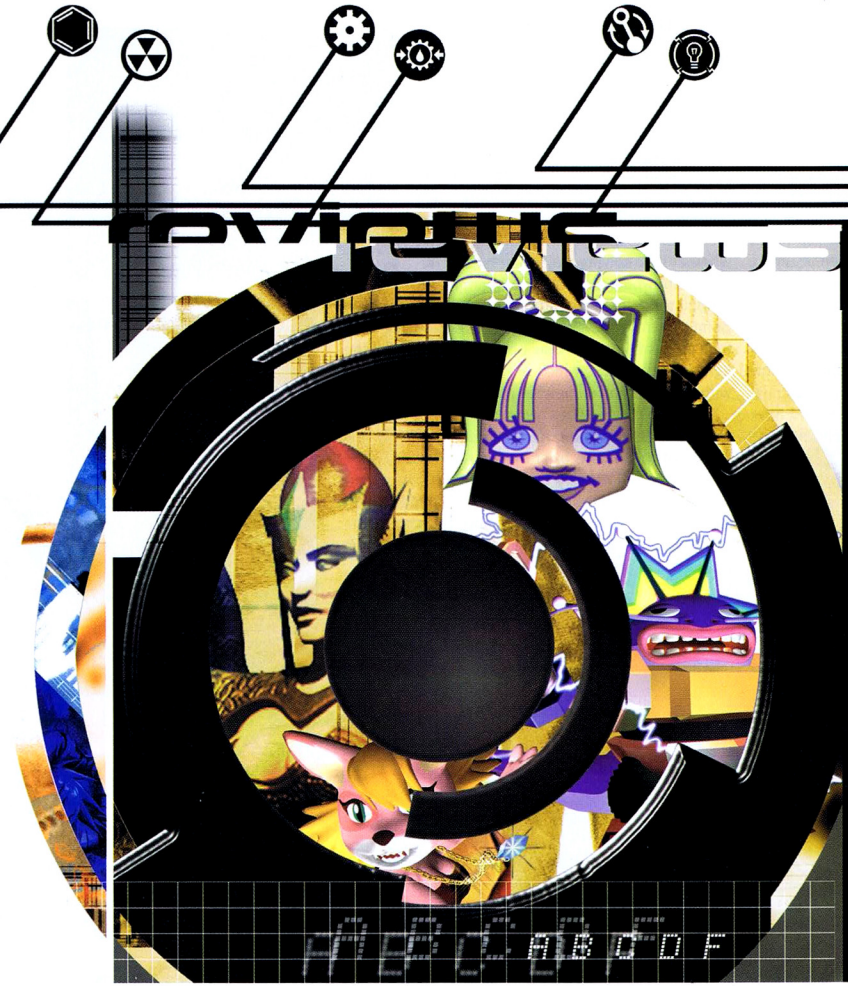
He's a lean, green fightin' machine and Millenium's got all his moves in this Official Strategy Guide!

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MILLENNIUM
PUBLICATIONS INC

The game floats around the industry for nearly five years, showing its face as far back as the first E3. This sounds like a formula for disaster, and yet *Heart of Darkness*, finally surfacing on the PS, breaks free from its incessant delays and immerges as one of the finest adventure/platformers of the year. Platforming fans won't be the only ones pleased this month - *Kartia*, a superb strategy RPG, temporarily nourishes the starving genre. Of course, action games will never be in limited supply, and *Future Cop* stands tall in the crowd.



reviews

GAMES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

BLITZ - PS	B
BLITZ - N64	B+
BOMBERMAN HERO	C+
CARDINAL SYN	C
FUTURE COP	B
G DARIUS	B
GAMEDAY 99	B+
GEX PC	B
GT 64	D
HEART OF DARKNESS	A-
IGGY'S RECKIN' BALLS	B-
KARTIA	B
MADDEN 99 - PS	B
MADDEN 99 - N64	A-
MOTORCROSS MADNESS	C
NASCAR 99	C-
PENNYRACERS	B
ROSCO MCQUEEN	C-
SPICEWORLD	C+
TALES OF DESTINY	B-
TEAM LOSI RC RACER	C
THUNDERFORCE V	B+
TRAP GUNNER	C+
URBAN ASSAULT	C

A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D D- F

[A+ to A] Games in this bracket are the indubitable cream of the crop. They feature the very best in visual presentation, and are excellent in both initial and long term playability. The very best video game of its type, worthy of every gamer's undivided attention. *Example: Banjo and Kazooie*

[A- to B] Games in this bracket are excellent, solid and highly playable pieces of software, although they lack minor polish to become truly outstanding. Slight graphical glitching coupled with a marginally disappointing ending may mar an otherwise exalted release. *Example: F-Zero X*

[B- to C] Games in this bracket are generally very good, but may have one or more flaws. A a game receiving a B- may be a great game that's just too short or has irritating music, while a C may have these same problems and a couple more. Very good to average entertainment. *Example: Iggy's Reckin' Balls*

[C- to D] Games in this bracket require serious help in two or more areas. Perhaps the control responds horribly and the characters animate poorly. Although a game of this caliber may have had a great initial concept, it was never fully realized in the final stages of design. *Example: Mission Impossible*

[D- to F] Very rarely will you come across a game of this lack of quality. A complete dearth of vision, a determination to remove any semblance of gameplay or fun, and particular attention made to use none of the most rudimentary of the system's proprietary tools. *Example: Dominion*

1. Games marked in RED are highly recommended for your gaming collection.

2. Games marked in BLUE should be avoided completely.

[Subject to the reviewer's personal preferences, it can be generally accepted that any game scoring a B or higher is a great way to spend your gaming evening. Games scoring a low D or F should be microwaved for three seconds and returned.]

By Brady Fiechter

bomberman hero

Indeed a hero to many as a brilliant multiplayer game, Bomberman takes its legacy into the world of 3D platforming

A game like *Bomberman Hero* needs to be viewed with an open mind. Don't expect it to be a technological wonder. Don't expect it to send your heart racing from powerful boss encounters. And certainly don't expect it to captivate you with its overall design. But throw away any lofty expectations you might have of what *Bomberman* should be like in a 3D environment on the Nintendo 64, and you might be surprised at just how much fun an unassuming game can actually be.

Drawing off its superb multi-player battle modes, *Bomberman* has always been about gameplay, never calling on an ostentatious presentation to draw in gamers. Considering that *Bomberman* has now made an uncharacteristic move into 3D platforming, it would have helped matters if Hudson would have decided to go with a little flash to strengthen the adventure, but it would seem that the tradition of gameplay over looks will continue.

Because the gameplay works as well as it does, *Bomberman Hero* has a classic draw to it that keeps the player interested throughout the entire adventure. The levels are a bit short, but their large numbers and exceptional variety are more than enough to satisfy. There is always a task a bit different than the last to perform, whether it be solving a platform puzzle, riding a snowboard or mini submarine, or dropping bombs over water via a propeller fixed on Bomberman's head. Where the satisfaction begins to fade is in the harshly basic boss encounters and the light difficulty level, which bring the game to its end with marginal and somewhat mechanical effort.

But when the end does come, it's hard not to appreciate the *Bomberman Hero* experience. So few games of this nature exist on the Nintendo 64, and despite its rudimentary qualities, *Bomberman Hero* has a pleasant air surrounding all its simplicity. To fully enjoy it, just try not to think about *Banjo* and the example it sets for what 3D platformers should have evolved to at this point.



















■ GOOD VARIETY IN MISSIONS ■ PLEASING 3D PLATFORMING - JUST WHAT N64 NEEDS	■ FEEBLE GRAPHICS HINT OF A FIRST-GENERATION TITLE ■ FAR TOO EASY AND MECHANICAL

REPUBLIC SAYS... BOMBERMAN HERO SETS NO STANDARDS, AND YET IT DOESN'T SEEM TO MIND. IT HARNESSES THE STOCK PLATFORMING ENGINE AND RUNS IN A COMFORTABLE LOW GEAR.

C+

Artwork © Hudson. 1998.





Kronos took their sweet time in developing *Cardinal Syn*, their latest effort in the crowded one-on-one fighting sweepstakes. And while this is probably their strongest bid yet at producing a truly playable and entertaining fighting game, it is sadly marred by a common failing in American-bred fighters - unresponsive, awkward and unrewarding control. At least in comparison to *Soul Blade*, *Bushido* and even second-tier fighters like *Star Gladiator*, *Cardinal Sin* simply lacks the kind of intuitive, flowing control that is the backbone of any halfway decent fighting game.

It's obvious that the bulk of Kronos' skill lies in the visual arts, and *CS* is replete with impressive CG intros for all characters and a well produced opening movie; and the in-game graphics are pleasing as well, most notably in a few nicely designed stages and decent character models. It's unfortunate, then, that most of the characters are either derivative in design or just downright silly looking. There's the cyclops Mongoro who resembles an out of shape Voldo and the peg leg Plague who looks like a warmed over blue corpse. Not exactly the kind of characters that you can get into or feel a connection with in any way.

As I mentioned earlier, this game's fatal flaw is its control. I simply do not understand why seemingly every fighting game made in this country has characters that shuffle around the arena and move with stiff imprecision. Perhaps it's stereotypical and naive to assume that the Japanese are better overall at making fighting games because of a more developed understanding of the way human figures move due to more pervasive martial arts and traditions such as kendo. However, it's the only explanation I can come up with that makes any sense. Instead of being inspired to play *CS* with some style or finesse, the experience invariably devolves into a state of button-mashing; you can't be bothered to play any other way. Ideas such as offensive blocks and complete 360 degree freedom are completely wasted.

If it seems I'm being hard on this game, it's only because there are so many good 3D fighting games out there now that there isn't time for something average like *Cardinal Syn*. I appreciate Kronos' effort to try something different with the game's theme and presentation, but the play experience simply fails to deliver. >:(

Kronos deliver their strongest fighter to date.
Unfortunately, that means it's only better than Criticom and Dark Rift.

cardinal syn

by Mike Hobbs





- GOOD CG AND IN-GAME GRAPHICS
- NICE PRESENTATION AND THEME
- UNRESPONSIVE AND UNREWARDING CONTROL
- FREE-ROAMING STAGES RUINED BY STIFF ACTION

REPUBLIC SAYS... KRONOS KEEP PLUGGING AWAY AND EACH ATTEMPT IS BETTER THAN THEIR LAST, BUT THEY STILL HAVE A WAYS TO GO IN PRODUCING A WORLD CLASS FIGHTER.

C

future cop

By Brady Fiechter

Show the future scum of L.A. that their only right is to be shot down!

I see a pattern here. Criminals scream in protest that their rights are being violated while they and their stomping grounds are demolished. In the airport, it is announced that a white Bronco with license plate number OJ_ is illegally parked. In prison, a security gate is deactivated, releasing a mass of prisoners who delightfully cry "freedom" just before a police unit shoots the majority of them down and crushes any that are left as they scramble towards the open door. Perhaps I'm stretching this a bit too far, but I'd say the developers of *Future Cop: L.A.P.D* had a little fun when making this superb game, and allowed some of their thoughts on the criminal and his rightful place within society to seep into the design process.

But no matter. Whatever the inspiration to *Future Cop*, its expression has yielded a tightly wound, skillfully crafted, cleverly devised action game in which the path to victory is one that is left in manic ruin. In either hovercar form or walker form, a police unit travels over land and water with the primary task of destroying the strongholds that have been built-up around Los Angeles by its various crime syndicates. Each gang leader you are after is hold up deep in the labyrinthine levels of convoluted steel catwalks and multi-tiered concrete structures, and locating him can prove quite daunting. Navigating the mazes in a deep search for switches to activate and deactivate various security gates and platforms is an engaging challenge, and when forced to employ precision platforming skills, the missions become even more demanding and entertaining.









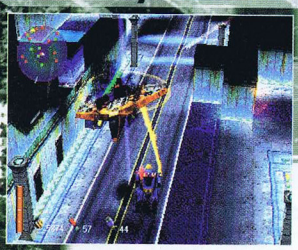


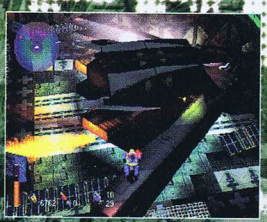




Crime prevention done properly - shoot everything

Set in the 22nd century, *FC* frames the picture one might personally paint of a future L.A., and does so with unique, convincing clarity. The game rests comfortably in levels that are technically superb, continually garnering admiration through imaginative designs fleshed out with fine details, rich colors, and keen lighting. Nothing here is revolutionary, but the game packs one heck of a punch.





- INTRICATE LEVEL LAYOUT AND COOL LOOK
- FANTASTIC LIGHTING PAINTS A GRITTY L.A.
- A CREATIVE 2-PLAYER MODE ADDS EVEN MORE
- CAMERA IS JUMPY. NEVER RESTING WHERE IT SHOULD

REPUBLIC SAYS... DEVELOPED BY THE TEAM WHO BROUGHT US THE STRIKE SERIES, FUTURE COP IS A RELENTLESS MISSION OF FIERY INTENSITY THROUGH A SUPERBLY DESIGNED 22ND CENTURY L.A.

B







Heart Of Darkness

explore the unknown

Enter a child's deepest nightmare

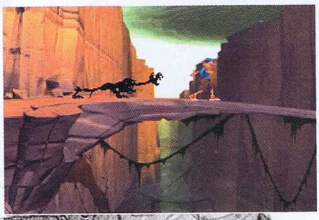
Heart of Darkness is a treasure of a game, a wonderfully creative, beautifully executed, highly imaginative adventure that sparkles through to the very end. Part of the game's charm is in the way it uses everything that works about platforming, molding it, building on it, cultivating it to a level of invention that is a delight to behold.

Owing a great deal to the classics *Flashback* and *Out of This World*, the gameplay is a skillful balance of weapon combat, puzzle solving, and slower paced, intricate climbing and jumping, of which observation and planning are as important as adroit maneuvering. Every situation faced, whether it is descending a collapsed bridge, swimming in a flooded cave, or swinging across swamps and lava, requires a sharp study of the surroundings - the game dips into the mind as much as the reflexes.

The visual style, immersed heavily in a surreal, warmly colorful dream world fed from the story's focus on a boy and his fear of the dark, is cast in a blanket of shadows. The strange creatures crawling under the rocks and lurking in the darkness are a work of wonder, animating with a level of complexity rarely seen in a video game. Throughout the journey, peculiar allies are also met, and they tell the majority of the story through superb CG cut-scenes, which make integral transitions during the levels. With the meticulous attention to detail, the invaluable touches of background animations and superb ambient sounds, and the creative way every scene transpires, the game is awash in a captivating cinematic atmosphere.

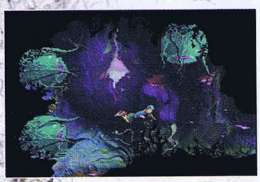
Excelling in so many ways, it is almost tempting to forgive *Heart of Darkness* for its faults: the heavy trial-and-error mode of play can become a bit tedious at times and the experience ends much too quickly. But any failings are left in the distance as we are carried away on the wings of the designers' soaring imaginations.

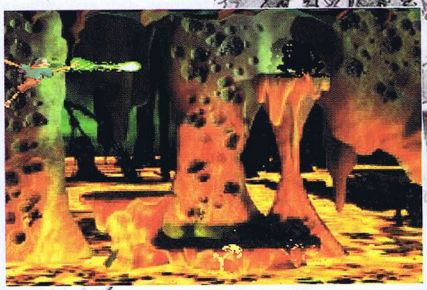




heart of darkness

By Brady Fiechter







- GRAPHICS A STYLISTIC AND TECHNICAL TRIUMPH
- DEEPLY INVOLVING PLATFORMING
- CG CUT SCENES ADD IMMENSELY TO THE ATMOSPHERE
- TRIAL & ERROR CAN FRUSTRATE - NOT FOR EVERYONE

REPUBLIC SAYS... AN UNFORGETTABLE, HUGELY INVOLVING ADVENTURE FROM BEGINNING TO END, HEART OF DARKNESS IS ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE GAMES OF THE YEAR.

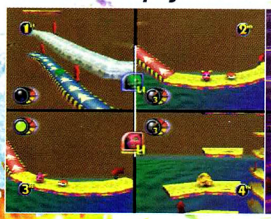
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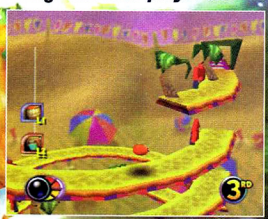




Awesome two-player action...



...and outrageous four-player action!



iggy's reckin' balls

Reck your friend's balls today!

by Bryn Williams

There is no doubt that most people will have never seen a game like *Iggy's Reckin' Balls* before. Taking the popular 2.5D perspective (i.e. *Klonoa* and *Pandemonium*), you are challenged to race your balls around circuits in order to reach the goal. Levels differ incredibly from initially simple straight tracks with jumps to huge towers with multiple routes. If you remember *Uni-Racers* on the SNES, then you will have some idea of how *IRB* plays and controls. Obviously analog control is now the order of the day, providing accurate application of movement, and by combining this to the grappling-hook facility that each ball possess you are able to speed around the course, make tricky jumps, and hoist and swing your ball up through the treacherous paths. While being fun as a single player game, *IRB* really scores big points as a multiplayer experience. Although the split-screen action can get a little confusing from time to time, it is excellent fun with a bunch of mates; the feeling of beating other players because you know a superior route is very satisfying. *IRB* also features over 100 different tracks and you are able to free-up 17 different balls. Some balls have grotesque faces, robot faces and cute smiley faces, and they all work rather well.

Soon you'll have a favorite ball, and you will be blasting around the courses, speeding and jumping up the tall towers at high velocities. While not the most visually appealing game on the N64, *Iggy's Reckn' Balls* can certainly offer an injection of originality to your cartridge collection. Give it a whirl.





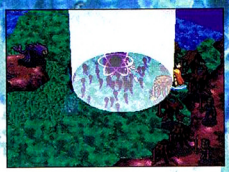


- A WIDE VARIETY OF STRANGE BALLS TO CHOOSE FROM
- EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD MULTIPLAYER GAMING
- TRACKS CAN BECOME A TAD TEDIOUS AFTER A WHILE
- CERTAINLY ORIGINAL, BUT NOT EVERYONE'S IDEA OF FUN

REPUBLIC SAYS... IGGY'S IS A GOOD LAUGH, ESPECIALLY WHEN PLAYED WITH MORE THAN 2 PEOPLE. SLIGHT FOG AND WEIRD TRACK DESIGNS ARE MINOR FLAWS... GO FOR THE LEAD RIGHT NOW!

B-









The search for Eden is one of conflict, not of peace



kartia

by Brady Fiechter

Like so many strategy RPGs before it, *Kartia* tells a story of war and deception: A rebel force incites a resistance force, battles ensue, swords are drawn, magic is cast, and characters are brought closer together, bonding as the fighting takes its emotional toll. Despite being tied down to its banal dialogue, *Kartia* occasionally hints of greatness, and even in its lowest moments, the story is molded well enough that our interest in the characters and their plight never fades.

Even if the story didn't work as well as it does, *Kartia* would succeed through its engaging battle system alone, in which the majority of the game transpires. To emerge victorious, careful attention must be made to weapon, phantom, and armor creation, and terrain must be altered or destroyed to open up paths and to form a more optimum positioning for offensive and defensive strategies. Deeply involving and highly entertaining, the turn-based battles will prove formidable to even the most seasoned strategist, but where the combat slowly loses its effectiveness is in the sterile, overly flat landscapes. The lack of more elaborate, tiered buildings and land tends to cut down on the strategy and lasting interest of *Kartia*, and this detriment also bleeds into its visual appeal. While maintaining an overall pleasing look, especially in the character art by Amano Yoshitaka of *Final Fantasy* fame, *Kartia* is treading on risky ground by keeping the architecture so simplistic – the only harsh mistake found in the game. But plainness does not constitute an absence of artistic inspiration. *Kartia* uses its minimalism as well as it can, and when wrapped in beautifully atmospheric music and CG cut-scenes, an immensely satisfying experience will temporarily fill the void that is so gaping in this hungry genre.











- FANTASTIC ARTWORK AND CHARACTER DESIGNS
- TWO SEPARATE QUESTS ADD TO LONGEVITY
- A UNIQUE VERSUS MODE PITS YOU AGAINST A FRIEND
- THE TERRAIN LACKS VARIETY AND DETAIL

REPUBLIC SAYS... WITH AN INVOLVING BATTLE SYSTEM, APPEALING VISUAL STYLE, AND ADEQUATE STORY, KARTIA WILL BE A PLEASANT SURPRISE FOR FANS OF STRATEGY RPGS.

B

By Dave Halverson

penny racers

takara's famed super deformed racer comes to the nintendo 64 in high style!

Known to those who frequent the import emporiums as *Choro-Q*, the long-running series has finally spawned a Nintendo 64 cartridge. Aside from the smooth running engine and excellent soundtrack (!), *Penny Racers* is the first in the series to adhere to the Japanese toy line from Takara from which it's based on. It's also the best version since the original PlayStation game. So it is with some degree of luck, I suppose, that this is the first *Choro-Q* game to set tire on American soil (thanks to import savvy T•HQ). At first glance you may be inclined to pass off *Penny Racers* as merely another *Mario Kart* clone with its cute cars and variety of weaponry. While there are vague similarities, I assure you that the two games differ in execution quite a bit. For starters, controlling a Penny Racer is markedly different than any "real" feeling car (or kart) you've ever steered. Negotiating tight corners requires a well-timed barrel roll using the R1-trigger, while other times careful planning and/or breaking comes into play. Penny Racers spend most of their time cocked up onto two wheels or slamming into one another. That is, when they're not setting traps or launching missiles. Once you choose a racer, you'll need to spend some quality time getting comfy with it, but once you do, the game takes on a very unique feel, often reaching frenetic levels of speed and mayhem. To make things even more interesting, the way that you obtain upgrades is unique in itself. After placing in the top three, you're given a choice of parts to rob from one of three other racers (the la-hoosers if you will). So if a particular competitor's weapon has been cramping your style, or if you're after a certain part, you can actually steal it. Be careful, though: place fourth or worse and the winners take from you. So, by winning, you strategically weaken your opponent, and vise-versa. Hence, this is the struggle of the toy car. Try not to cry. Before each race, you'll enter a settings menu where you can upgrade your car up to a certain limit with the loot you've acquired. Balancing your racer for each course and its accompanying condition adds elements of strategy and re-playability to *Penny Racers*. Different racers and combinations weigh greatly against the varied terrain and conditions.

Graphically, *Penny Racers* delivers with a solid 3D engine, nice effects, and simple yet attractive texture maps. It's a well produced game that makes good use of the system's capabilities. In comparison to *Mario Kart*, its closest rival, I believe *Penny Racers* may be a touch faster and overall more engrossing, with the emphasis on skill as much as weapon displacement. No other comparisons can be drawn, as the two games differ quite a bit otherwise. If you're tormented by racers littered with chance and like it straight simulation style, then *Penny Racers* may not be your cup of tea, but everybody else in 64 land should definitely give it a whirl. T•HQ have wisely imported another fine title.





















Artwork © Takara. 1998.

- UNENDING WEAPON AND ITEM COMBINATIONS
- ALL TYPES OF TERRAIN AND WEATHER REPRESENTED
- WELL BALANCED BETWEEN RACING AND FIGHTING
- IT'S CRAZY, MAN! YOU GOTTA HAVE PATIENCE!

REPUBLIC SAYS... T•HQ HAVE PICKED A WINNER. PENNY RACERS IS EASILY ONE OF THE BEST N64 RACERS TO DATE. THERE'S ENOUGH HERE TO ENTERTAIN FOR WEEKS. A DEFINITE PURCHASE.

8









spiceworld

by Dave Halverson





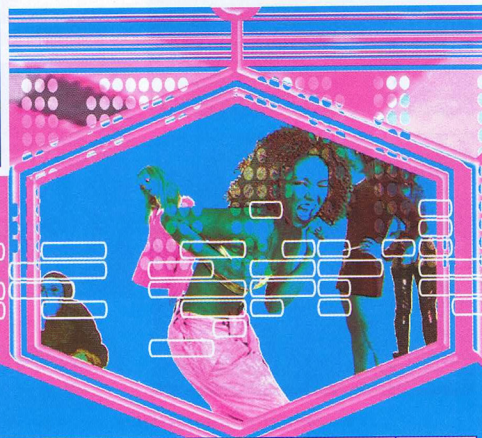
Am I on dangerous ground or what! Put a positive spin on the Spice Girls and I'll have to move to Alaska, but if I pretend not to admire them from afar I'd be lying. The Spice Girls are a modern marketing miracle as well as the most attractive pop squad since Bananarama. Critically brutalized on a daily basis, I can't understand where all the venom comes from over four scantily clad girls dancing and singing for their predominantly young public (although I think it's safe to assume that every beer-gutted trailer park dweller has a *Spice* movie hidden behind the 6-pack in the freezer). This is America after all, home of the horny President and man-beast Attorney General. Come on, this I deem normal and somewhat predictable. I also know all about pressure. Forget about how - just know that I do. And to memorize lyrics and intricate dance numbers and then perform them for hours in front of thousands of people, including critics who can't wait to tear you a new one, takes talent, guts, and determination. The fact that they're all millionaires and continue to work in the eye of adversity because they are so successful (critics absolutely hate what they cannot understand and are made up predominately of the people you beat up in high school) I find most admirable. My taste in music ranges from metal to techno, from ambient to classical, but I still find myself reluctant to turn down the radio when one of the girls' less bubble-gum-tastic songs comes on. They're an optimistic bunch for sure. Psygnosis' *Spice Girls* game, however, is reserved for hard-core fans, as it is more an interactive experience than an eclectic one like *Bust a Move* or *Parrapa*. You do not buy this game for the gameplay. The novelty, perhaps, but the game play... nuh-uh. As a fan CD it is excellent, providing behind-the-scenes candor you can only get here, as well as an entertaining little dance-mix game that takes you from practice all the way to your own Spice TV show, mainly through memorization and lots of "girl power." You'll have to train all five (Geri left after the game was completed) to make the big time. Some rhythm will do you right when you get into the studio, but otherwise it's all about writing down or memorizing the girls' moves as you've mixed them. Overall the game is extremely polished in its presentation and, while it's not for me, the fans it is made for will undoubtedly thoroughly appreciate it. Hey, it kicks the crap out of *Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch* or any of that Sega CD crap. So chill, and let the girls have some fun.











girl power

- GIRL POWER IS ALIVE AND WELL ON THE PLAYSTATION!
- OFF CAMERA CANDOR- A FAN'S DREAM COME TRUE
- WITH ONLY FIVE SONGS TO REMIX IT'S A BIT SHALLOW
- SCARY'S BOOBS DON'T BOUNCE!

REPUBLIC SAYS... I WAS HOPING SPICE WOULD BE MORE LIKE BUST A GROOVE AND LESS LIKE SO MANY SEGA-CD TRAGEDIES OF OLD. AT LEAST IT'S POLYGONAL. FMV SUCKED.

C+

tales of destiny

By Brady Fiechter

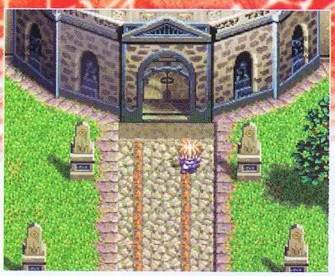


Highly reminiscent of RPGs from the 16-bit days, *Tales of Destiny* is no technical marvel, no immediate attention grabber, certainly no work of next-generation programming, and yet it picks us up and carries us along in its quaint atmosphere, holding our attention until the very end of its journey. Sitting comfortably in its pleasant artwork, the game constructs a charming world of a primitive time, in which cobblestone towns, log cabins in snow-filled woods, and ancient monasteries fill the land. The visual style is gracefully aged, colorful but simplistic, drawing a great deal from the appeal of a 16-bit title. There are times when *Tales of Destiny* does indeed appear somewhat outmoded, and there are times when it is far superior to anything that you would find on an earlier system. But no matter what is technically being displayed in a certain scene, nearly every moment is appealing in its artistic expression; there is a lesson to be learned in the wonderful atmosphere that can be created by nothing more than the interior of a modest wood cabin, in which an animated fireplace burns under a window where snow is visibly falling outside.

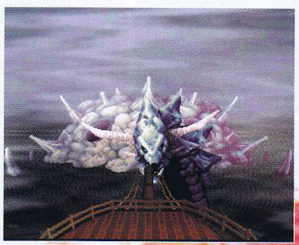


The charismatic characters take their rightful place in the overall atmosphere of the game, exuding a deformed, classic RPG style, and when they do battle, *Tales of Destiny* reveals its most creative design aspect. Novel in its approach and enjoyable in its execution, the combat scenes allow four of the six young warriors to be controlled through special moves, such as spinning sword thrusts and jumping slashes, in a real-time scenario. The enemy can be attacked as quickly as moves can be commanded, and while three of the party members fight independently from your character, their base strategy can be dictated to through an array of battle options: Choose aggression or defense, focus on a weaker opponent first, use technique points with impunity. Adding a lively tone to the battles, the system is a nice change from the typical turn-based combat we see in most RPGs. The system is not perfect but, like the game itself, it's a breath of fresh air in a sometimes polluted 32-bit world.









A comet struck centuries ago

A civilization is only now beginning to feel its true impact

Decades after a devastating war, a great band of warriors known as Swordians are again awakened

- NO TECHNICAL WONDER, BUT APPEALING IN DESIGN
- INNOVATIVE BATTLE SYSTEM
- BUT BATTLES ARE MUCH TOO FREQUENT
- RPGS DEMAND GOOD MUSIC - THIS IS FAR FROM GOOD.

REPUBLIC SAYS... SOMETIMES IT'S GOOD FOR A GAME LIKE ToD TO FEED NOSTALGIA. VIEW IT AS AN EXCELLENT 16-BIT RPG, AN ESPECIALLY SATISFYING EXPERIENCE FOR THE ENTHUSIAST GAMER.

B-

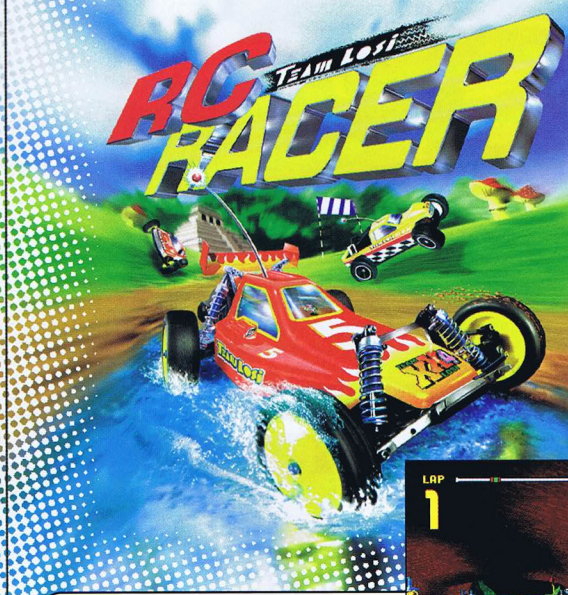
Win a Gamers' Republic Team Losi RC Racer!



Grand Prize (1):

1 RC Racer Car
1 Rechargable Battery
1 Battery Recharger
1 Team Losi RC Racer Game
1 Team Losi RC Racer Jacket
1 Team Losi RC Racer T-shirt
1 Team Losi RC Racer Hat







First Prize (5):

1 Team Losi RC Racer Game
1 Team Losi RC Racer T-shirt
1 Team Losi RC Racer Hat



Second Prize (10):

1 Team Losi RC Racer Game

Team Losi RC RACER

Rules & Regulations

1. To Enter: No purchase necessary. Only one entry per person, please. Anyone submitting more than one entry will be disqualified. To enter for your chance to be one of sixteen (16) winners in Gamers' Republic' Team Losi RC Racer Sweepstakes: Complete the entry found in the October 1998 issue of Gamers' Republic and mail to "Team Losi RC Racer Sweepstakes," c/o Gamers' Republic, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, Suite 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361. Or, send a 3 x 5 card with your name, address, city, state, zip code, daytime phone number and age and mail to: "Team Losi RC Racer Sweepstakes," c/o Gamers' Republic, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, Suite 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361. All mail entries must be received by November 1, 1998. Sponsors assume no responsibility for lost, late, damaged, misdirected, illegible, incomplete, postage-due mail or entries. Photocopies, facsimiles and other reproductions will not be accepted. No facsimile or mechanically reproduced entries allowed. All entries become the property of the sponsor and will not be returned.

2. Prizes: Grand Prize (1): Team Losi Double-XT 'CR', Novak Rhino Charger, Novak Rooster Speed Controller, JR Propo XR2 Radio, Trinity Motor & Battery, Official Team Losi Jacket, T-Shirt, and Hat and a Team Losi RC Racer PlayStation video game. Approximate retail value: $1000. First Prize (2): Team Losi RC Racer PlayStation video game, Team Losi T-Shirt and Hat. Approximate retail value: $70. Runners-up (5): Team Losi RC Racer PlayStation video game Approximate retail value: $44.98. All prizes will be awarded.

3. Judging: All eight winners will be determined in a random drawing from all eligible entries received on or about November 26, 1998 by Gamers' Republic magazine, whose decisions will be final in all matters related to this sweepstakes. Judges reserve the exclusive right to interpret all conditions in regard to this promotion without claim for damage or recourse of any kind. By participating in the sweepstakes, entrants agree to be bound by the rules and the decisions of the judges that shall be final. Odds of winning depend on the total number of eligible entries received. All winners will be notified by mail. Grand prize and First-place winners may be required to sign and return an affidavit of eligibility and liability release within 21 days of notification. If the affidavit is not returned within the given time period properly executed, or is returned from the post office as undeliverable, an alternate winner will be chosen. If the Grand Prize and First place winners are under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian must also sign and provide their social security number on the Affidavit of Eligibility/Release of Liability & Publicity. Except where prohibited, acceptance of a prize constitutes winner's consent to use his/her name, likeness and biographical data for advertising and promotional purposes without additional compensation.

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5. For a list of winners, available after December 14, 1998, send an S.A.S.E. to "Team Losi RC Racer Sweepstakes Winners List," c/o Gamers' Republic, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, Suite 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

6. For a complete list of rules, send a S.A.S.E. to: "Team Losi RC Racer Sweepstakes Rules," c/o of Gamers' Republic, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, Suite 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361

thunder force v

By Mike Hobbs

Circulate-Death

Tecno soft unleash their manic Saturn shooter on the PlayStation.





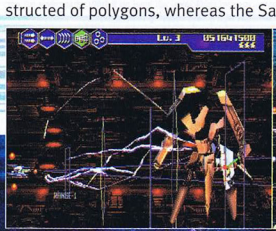


It's good to see that one of the Japanese Saturn's finest shooters has made it not only to the PlayStation, but the United States as well. For those unfamiliar with the mechanics of *TFV*, your ship's firepower revolves around an apparatus called "craws," which circle your craft and increase the effectiveness of your current weapon. You can carry up to three craws at a time and they double as energy sources for a powered-up blast unique to each weapon. Running down the list of available armament (yes, the familiar cyber-attendant calls out each one) you've got the traditionally effective Hunter, Twin Shot, Back Shot, Wave (a beam that penetrates obstacles), and the unique Free Range, a concentrated beam that locks on within a movable targeting triangle. Proper weapon displacement is key in achieving your mission goals, which are now more difficult, thanks to some much needed tweaking. *TFV* will not go down in a day like the import version did, and rightfully so. You'll need to master it on hard to reap the full benefits.

The Saturn version of *Thunderforce V* made good use of Mode 7-type backgrounds, producing an impressive effect on planet surfaces. The PS unfortunately can't handle these types of effects with much degree of success. Displaying large flat planes on the PS ends up being very processor intensive since these background features must be constructed of polygons, whereas the Saturn is able perform these tasks in its sleep, thanks to the VDP 2. Scrolling Mode 7-type floors that seemingly stretched to infinity on Saturn are rather rough looking and truncated on the PS, eliminating some depth from the backgrounds. There are additional subtle differences in other background elements, but nothing overwhelming. On the other hand, the real time 3D models look better on the PS with higher quality textures. The game also benefits from less slowdown compared to the Saturn version. And while surrounded by the trademark adrenaline pumping soundtrack, encountering a boss and watching the camera spin around to greet it, you know you're playing a thoroughbred *Thunderforce* game.

There's no denying the intensity of *TFV*, and it's certainly different enough from *Einhander* and *G-Darius* to warrant a purchase if you're a shooter fan. The inclusion of all new CG cut scenes and increased difficulty for the U.S. make for a well rounded PS version of the Saturn shooter classic. :)











- NEW RENDERED SCENES ADD AN EXTRA BIT OF FLASH.
- TYPICALLY EXCELLENT TECNO SOFT SHOOTER ACTION
- GOOD MUSIC
- IT'S A GRAPHICAL GIVE AND TAKE FROM THE SATURN

REPUBLIC SAYS... OFFERING A MORE INTENSE BUT SHORTER PLAY EXPERIENCE THAN G-DARIUS, TECNO SOFT'S SHOOTER ACUMEN SHINES THROUGH WITH THUNDER FORCE V.

B+

THUNDER FORCE V
TEAM OF THE EARTH SIDE

Refined "Vasteel" Replica-01 "GAUNTLET"

THUNDER FORCE V THE EARTH SIDE SPECIAL COMBAT TEAM NO. 222



trap gunner

by Brady Fiechter

Inspired by the *Spy vs. Spy* series on the NES and Apple II, *Trap Gunner* is an unexpectedly original game that manages to capture an unusually pleasing, unspoiled look and feel. As special agents pitted against one another on a sort of cat-and-mouse fight to the death, two of six anime-styled characters attempt to ensnare one another by covertly laying traps around the constricted interior of industrialized buildings of the future. Crucial to victory is the clever placement of the traps: By itself, a detonator may not be entirely effective, but link it to a series of bombs, and the explosive radius can be inescapable. And a timed gas pellet may be easily avoided, but in conjunction with a pitfall trap – an energy field that incapacitates the enemy – the damage can be deadly. After you've begun to effectively utilize every item in your arsenal, clever combos can be set up for even more damage. If you improperly place a weapon when devising a trap, or when you find a hidden enemy device, the danger can be diverted through careful disarmament within an allotted time frame – an aspect in which some levels are based around entirely. Hand-to-hand and weapon combat also come into play, and both are an integral part of the overall strategy.

The setup is deviously simple yet cleverly addicting, grabbing your attention from the outset. But as a single player game (2-player is where it's at), the initial draw of *Trap Gunner* begins to get siphoned out by levels that, while cleanly designed and nicely detailed, are a bit restrictive and tend to blend together into a monotonous look and feel. With *Trap Gunner's* promising design and unique premise, it's a shame the game is comfortable with its adequacy, never realizing its huge potential and capitalizing on it.





- GRAPHICS ARE BASIC YET APPEALING
- ADDICTING 2-PLAYER MODE
- REFRESHING SETUP THE GAME'S BIGGEST DRAW
- BUT IT NEEDS TO BE TAKEN MUCH FURTHER

REPUBLIC SAYS... TG IS THE TYPE OF GAME THAT ENTERTAINS BUT CONSTANTLY KEEPS YOU AWARE OF ITS LITTLE ANNOYANCES. I WANT TO SEE THE SETUP REVISITED - THE DESIGN HAS POTENTIAL.

C+

G DARIUS

DEVELOPER: TAITO PUBLISHER: THQ AVAILABLE: NOW

B

PlayStation





There's been some encouraging activity of late in the 2D side scrolling shooter genre on PS. First we got Square's beautifully crafted *Einhander*, then a conversion of Technosoft's intense *Thunderforce V*, and now we get Taito's *G-Darius*, brought intact stateside by THQ. For anyone fond of the joys of bullet dodging and boss pattern memorization, things haven't looked this good in a long while.

Basically a conversion of the arcade title, *G-Darius* takes the series to its logical 32-bit evolution by crafting all of the backgrounds and enemies out of real-time polys. Gameplay remains 2D and every bit as fishy as the original three-screen arcade game. And while it can't hope to compete with *Einhander's* frame rate or inherent beauty, it makes up for it with more diverse and complex background elements. You'll fly past massive underwater structures and great floating cities on your way to the long and involving boss encounters. Unfortunately, *G-Darius* all too often slows down, robbing the game of some visual appeal.

Following the *Darius* tradition, the game levels are arrayed in a branching tree with you choosing which level to tackle next. In the end, it makes for a game that feels short, but it encourages you to play through several times in order to see all the different zones and bosses. *GD* even goes the series one better by also putting splits within the levels themselves, throwing even more variety your way. And expanding on an idea presented in *Darius Gaiden* is the new Capture Ball system. If you remember, *DG* allowed you to capture certain enemies by blowing off what I call the brain ball, whereupon the enemy would turn around and use his firepower to your advantage. In *GD*, you can do this with virtually any foe by throwing one of your own stock of Capture Balls at them and making them fight for you; finding the most useful captured enemy for each specific area adds a nice bit of strategy.

In the end, *G-Darius* doesn't quite have the visual impact of *Einhander* nor the mania of *Thunderforce V*, but it is a solid addition to the series and should please both fans of side scrolling shooters and *Darius*. Its extended boss encounters and Zuntata's trademark tunes burbling away in the background make for a good shooter experience. >[illegible]<





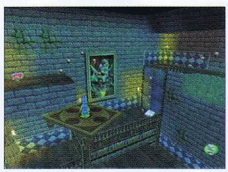


GEX PC

DEVELOPER: CRYSTAL PUBLISHER: MIDWAY AVAILABLE: NOW

B

PC CD ROM





What can I tell you about *GEX: Enter the Gecko* that you don't already know? The 360 degree, 3D free roaming TV and movie parody that set a new standard on the PlayStation has landed on PC in accelerated style. First plug in a controller (preferably the new Gravis Xterminator or MS Sidewinder) and then get ready to immerse yourself in the first true critter-based 3D platform adventure for PC. In your effort to hunt down REZ, who's bent on taking over the Nation's TV broadcasts, you'll travel through more mock sets than a Michael Jackson video while thrilling to 3,400 frames of character animation, 500 celebrity impersonations, and many disguises, like secret agent, karate man, and space GEX. The game looks absolutely brilliant on a Voodoo 2-accelerated PC and feels every bit as intuitive as it did on the PlayStation. If you play PC games exclusively and haven't yet experienced *GEX: Enter the Gecko*, you are in for one awesome reptilian caper. Let the PC critter-based adventure/ platforming begin! *Rayman 2*, *Tonic Trouble*, and *Space Circus* aren't far behind! Now we're talkin'!





GT 64

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: OCEAN AVAILABLE: NOW

D

N64



From the people who brought us *MRC* comes another racing game in the shape of the rather disappointing *GT64*. Granted, *MRC* had problems, but there really is no excuse to be releasing another title that is equally flawed, if not more so. Based on a similar theme to *Sega Touring Cars*, the game gives you the opportunity to race a relatively decent number of superpowered motors around tracks in Europe, the U.S. and Japan. All the usual features are present such as time trials, qualifying laps, split-screen action, car tinkering and tuning, etc., but this all drowns in insignificance when you discover that the game is exceptionally third rate. Let's start with the music and FX. The opening intro has some of the worst music ever heard on the N64, which is saying something. Combine this with mediocre engine noises, tire screeches and lame incidental music tracks to complete the aural tragedy. The graphics engine fairs no better, chugging along unconvincingly at "sub-30 fps," making for a messy control system, poor car handling and ergonomics (and that's just the one player mode). The race tracks are too long, and soon you'll find yourself staring straight through the TV into oblivion. Monotony is the key word of the day here, and considering the N64 has just eagerly received *F-Zero X*, there is absolutely no need to even consider this title for your collection. Laughably nasty.







MOTOCROSS MADNESS

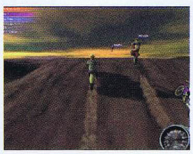
DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT AVAILABLE: NOW



PC gaming has come a long way in a short time, thanks in no small part to a little voodoo. It still, however, has not successfully landed on the saddle of a Motocross bike. What about *Moto-Racer*, you say? While *MR* is a fine ride, especially on PC, it's more of an all around dirt/enduro/road racer than a purebred MX'er. Sadly (or not, depending on how you look at it), so is *Motocross Madness*. While the game is rich in modes of play, options, cameras, and everything in between, it never captures the essence of Supercross. Tracks with no deep spots, berms, and very little in the way of adversity other than shape give the stadium races a stiff overall feel. Stiff, by the way, is the only way to describe the control. Even with the Sidewinder, there's an awkward feel to the racers themselves - although they sure can fly. On the positive side, the National races can be mildly fun, the stunt quarry is good for some thrills, and the overall presentation is slick and well thought out, with great sound effects and music and, of course, gorgeous accelerated graphics. In the end, I do marginally recommend *Motocross Madness* as a purchase, only not as a pure bred Motocross game but as an entertaining overall offroad chameleon. Come to think of it, the main flaw is probably the name. Call this game "Assorted Off-Road Mania" and you've hit the nail directly on the head.

PC CD ROM

C







TEAM LOSI RC RACER

DEVELOPER: GREMLIN PUBLISHER: FOX AVAILABLE: NOW



Team Losi RC Racer is an average racing game with an unorthodox theme: You are controlling one of over a dozen authentic Team Losi RC cars and trucks, racing across various types of miniature (to 1:10 scale) terrain. Areas like beaches, snowy hills, and volcanic islands can be accessed via a huge network of chambers with level portals. The control of the vehicles is quite good, especially with both analog sticks (although for some reason the left stick steers, and the right is forward/back... why?). Racing the levels alone was pretty fun. You can find all the secret branches in the track, and remember the location of speed power-up gates, which are essential to beating the CPU cars. Enter the main game, however, and you'll bear witness to some of the chunkiest slow-down currently plaguing the PS. Seriously, the frame rate drops to sub-15 almost every time the screen clogs with other cars and semi-complex environments. This becomes extremely distracting, as it's one of those frame rate problems that interrupts the flow of gameplay due to gaps between screen refresh times and control of the vehicle. This can also be said for the sluggish two-player mode, which slows down to a consistent sub-twenty fps all the time. You can enter the tournament-type levels in two-player mode (with opponents), however, which is always a cool feature. This game doesn't have what it takes, though. Strictly a rental. Trust me.

PlayStation

C





ROSCOE McQUEEN

DEVELOPER: SCEE PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS AVAILABLE: NOW



Enter urban structures, put out fires, and rescue the unfortunates trapped by the flames. Is it *Burning Rangers* on your PS?! No...it's another average game on your PS. *Rosco McQueen* has you guiding the amazingly lame character through burning buildings, destroying retarded security droids, spraying fire with a cheap-looking water cannon, and freeing poorly modeled fools hidden in various side rooms. Don't get me wrong: my harsh opinions come after an extensive playtest. *RM* has extremely small (albeit crisp looking) environments and a frame rate that judders here and there for no good reason. That's Part One of my disenchantment. Part Two involves Rosco himself and his hovering robo sidekick, Digital. I despise their design and all their cheesey comments. Moving on to Part Three of this thrashing: repetitious gameplay and stiff controls. Try the first few levels and wonder, just as I did, how long can this go on for? Witness the screen-turning gameplay and frown. Mock the slow-mo strafing. Point and laugh at the stiff jumping and pointless platforming. What's going on here? Psygnosis, you need to have standards! Stick with the cool stuff like *Wipeout* and possibly (eventually) *Psybadek*. *Rosco McQueen* won't hold your attention for more than a couple hours. It's definitely not among the worst PS titles, but considering all the upcoming hits, it's among the most unappealing to have in your collection.

C

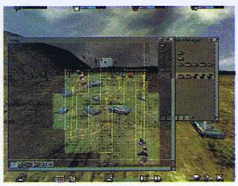
PlayStation





URBAN ASSAULT

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT AVAILABLE: NOW



If this is Bill Gates' vision of the future of computer interfaces, then I think everyone should seriously consider abandoning Windows right away and buy Macintoshes. In their newest title, *Urban Assault*, it seems that Microsoft decided to consider GUI impertinent, as its user interface is truly awful. After playing through the early less demanding levels, I found my strategy dependent on an extremely messy map splattered with red, blue, and yellow triangles, squares, and dots, all connected by a miserable web of trajectory-depicting hairlines overlaid on a piece of graph paper. All together, it looked more like a rather messy network schematic, and soon enough I had a major headache.



But who am I to judge a game solely on its interface? After all, there is a game here and it is not too bad. The story is engaging and well depicted, the missions are manifold, there is a wide array of air and land units to employ, the sensation of being in battle is authentic enough, and there is some fun to be had when taking control of individual units. But even so, the game's interface demerits its gameplay to a degree that cannot be avoided. Urban Assault unfortunately proves just how integral an interface is to an overall gaming experience.

C

PC CD ROM







SPORTS

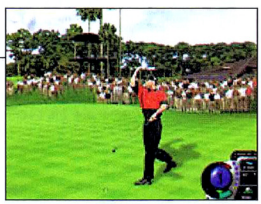
PRO FOOTBALL...BASEBALL...ICE HOCKEY...SOCCER...GOLF...BASKETBALL...FULL CONTACT..

It's all about the pigskin! This month we cruise along with the NFL's pre-season by bringing you bottom-line reviews for EA's PS and N64 versions of *Madden '99*, *Sony's Gameday '99*, and Midway's crushing arcade football brawler, *NFL Blitz*, for the PS and N64. We've spent days meticulously comparing the highs and lows of *Madden* and *Gameday*, as well as untold hours pounding the turf in *Blitz*. So get ready!

TIGER WOODS PGA GOLF TOUR '99

PS CD ROM

developer/publisher: electronic arts available: now



For once, a company addresses the one major deficiency that plagues all golf games up to now: slow-motion gameplay. All right, so that colloquialism is my own bitter creation... and it describes the unfortunate situation perfectly. You know what I mean: there's just never been the right flow between shot selection, execution, and ball cam. EA attempt to rectify the situation with hard-core 3D acceleration support, guiding you from shot to shot with the greatest (and smoothest) of ease. The mechanics are right on, like almost all past *PGA Tour* games, but the 3D support truly makes the difference. And fully rendered PGA courses and eight other PGA pros to compete against 'Da Man doesn't hurt, either. Wow, golf hasn't been this playable since *T&E* on the SNES.

NASCAR '99

developer/publisher: electronic arts available:now

NINTENDO 64





Nearly every company takes a misstep now and again and produces a game well below their capability. The company in question here is Electronic Arts, and the game is *Nascar 99* for the N64. Apart from the many real world courses, cars, and drivers, there is very little to recommend. And the emulation of this most North American of motorsports is in part to blame. A majority of the courses are ovals, just as in real life. In a video game, oval racing is just not involving enough, a fact not helped by less-than-pinpoint control. To make matters worse, the graphics are woefully inadequate. Copious draw-in and a soft, murky appearance do very little to stimulate the visual sense. But even if the control and graphics were better, *Nascar* itself is not a compelling enough sport to hold a player's interest.

• developer **midway** • publisher **midway** • available **now**

nfl blitz

By Brady Fiechter

Over-the-top, no-holds-barred football. No refs, no rules, no penalties. Anything goes in this brawl on the gridiron.

One play is all it will take for the intentions of *NFL Blitz* to be made sharply apparent. Whoever is carrying the ball will likely have his body violently tossed to the turf and subsequently leg dropped, and after the nearest defender follows up with a body slam, commentator Tim Kitzrow of *NBA Jam* fame will announce, in his typical exuberant fashion, that such a deplorable display of sportsmanship is "completely unnecessary." Oh, but I disagree. It is entirely necessary, because this is what makes *NFL Blitz* such a good time.

Far from a simulation, the game discards penalties and basically every rule and strategy that has been established in the game of football. No longer will 10 yards yield a first down. Now, your squad of seven players starts out at first and thirty, and making up the added distance will require the scrappiest strategies imaginable; it's not out of the question to pass the ball off three or four times in one play to expedite a drive. Blisteringly fast, frantically paced, outrageously staged, *Blitz* is completely over the top, replacing key strategies and careful playing calling with primal, back-yard football. Offense or defense, the main objective is to see how outrageous the next play can possibly be.

While *Blitz* is not at all ment to be a simulation, it wisely remains rooted in the key elements that make a great football game. The engine is surprisingly solid,





PS Version

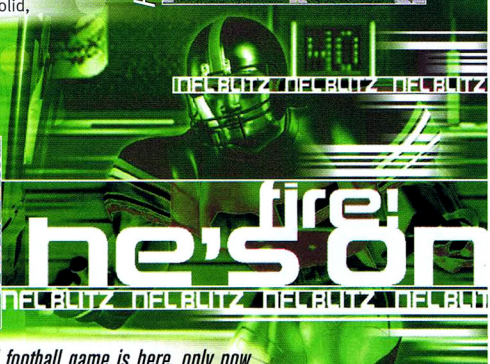


N64 Version









Everything you love about a good football game is here, only now juiced up to a feverish intensity of which there is no equal

lending a superbly structured feeling of football to the play, and the players animate remarkably well, fusing the sensation of bone-crunching realism to every tackle. It may not be the typical brand of football, but there is a distinctly desirable sensation of the sport underpinning all the exaggerations.

In comparing both titles of *Blitz*, everything that makes the N64 version so good has been dropped a slight notch from the PS one. Overall, the N64 version looks better and excels in the most important gameplay areas, offering a tighter, faster, and more satisfying game. Also, a cool play editor is missing from the Playstation game, but with its tournament mode, it attempts to make up for the four-player competition absent from both games. If you must choose between the two, the N64 version is truest to the arcade *Blitz*; however, both have done an exceptional job of bringing the arcade experience into the home, and when dropped into a 2-player or party setting, either game shows just how inescapably fun its disordered brand of football can be.

	Playstation	Nintendo 64
■ FANTASTIC 2-PLAYER GAME - EASY TO PICK UP ■ EXTREMELY SOLID PROGRAMMING ALL AROUND ■ SIMPLE, MANIC ARCADE PLAY IS MUCH OF THE APPEAL ■ PERHAPS A BIT TOO SIMPLE - SHALLOW IN GAMEPLAY	B	B+

REPUBLIC SAYS... ON BOTH SYSTEMS, BLITZ CAPTURES THE ENERGY OF THE ARCADE REMARKABLY WELL. IT MAY NOT BE DEEP, BUT ITS OUTRAGEOUS TAKE ON THE SPORT IS IMMEDIATELY GRATIFYING.

football

• developer **redzone/989 studios** • publisher **989 studios** • available **summer**

gameday '99

By Mike Griffin

It's *Madden* and *Gameday* this month, so it's time to lay down the absolute judgement no matter how harsh. After all, are you guys actually going to buy *Madden '99* and *Gameday '99*? No, probably not. You might rent one, and buy the other, but you're not going to shell out 40+ bucks twice, right? With this in mind, let's take a closer look at Sony's contender.

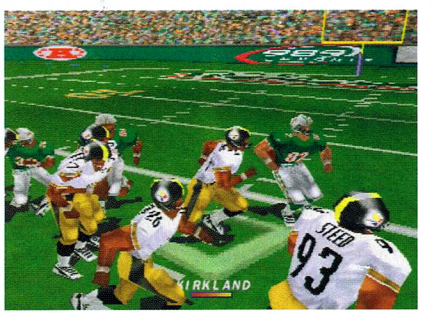
What makes *NFL Gameday '99* so good? 989 Sports and Red Zone Interactive have basically polished and retooled *Gameday '98* into an impressive, progressive sequel. *Madden '99* takes a huge step forward for the series by finally incorporating 3D player models into the game and blessing them with good collision, but it might need another year (on the PS anyway) to lock down the engine and tweak the design. *Gameday '99* gets almost everything right after two years in training camp.

Instead of delving into the typical rehash of title screen options, etc., suffice it to say that *Gameday '99* has all the typical play modes as well as a Customizable Season mode. The in-game options are the ones worth mentioning. Apart from awesome zero loading access to the cameras and instant replay, there's also a Customize Game option that allows you to tweak the CPU running and pass defense, IQ, player size, and game speed on the fly. This is nice when all you really want to do is get back into the game. Speaking of which, *Gameday '99* looks and plays extremely well on the field. The 350+ polygon players are more varied and detailed than *Madden's*, but they don't quite have as much animation or personality. *Madden's* waist lock-up take downs are totally satisfying to behold, whereas *Gameday's* tackles consist of the usual crunch and fall, push and tumble, with no real interaction. Cool idiosyncratic animations are present, though, like flexing celebrations for good plays and questioning shrugs after interference calls.

In the end, *Gameday's* beautiful interface and cleaner engine pushes it past Madden. It has less personality, but more glamour. The play calling is an example of this; *Madden's* interesting duo smashes *Gameday's* blatantly lethargic Dick Enberg/Phil Simms combo. Control is another area where *Madden* shines. You see, while both games offer almost exactly the same response time and selection of moves, *Madden* has great analog control and more creative use of the Dual Shock's vibration.

Once gameplay is solved, football games need to be judged based on options, engine, and interface, and *Gameday '99* has just a little more gumption in all these areas than *Madden*. If you have a PS and N64 though, the N64 version of *Madden* is probably the best bet out of all three. There you have it - that's the bottom line.





Here the running back takes a quick step away from Pittsburgh's massive defensive line. Intense moments like this are common .

- UPDATED ENGINE LOSES THE CHUG. ADDS POLYGONS
- CUSTOMIZED IN-GAME OPTIONS ARE EXCELLENT
- RESPONSIVE CONTROL - PASSING IS BETTER THAN EVER
- STILL A CLASSIC MULTIPLAYER GAME

REPUBLIC SAYS... *This year football games are a tough call, even with a replay. Gameday '99 edges out Madden '99 with a cleaner interface and engine, but only by a tiny margin.*

B+

• developer **electronic arts** • publisher **electronic arts** • available **now**

madden '99

By Mike Griffin

High-res 3D players, massive tackles - a new standard for EA!

The polygons have entered the stadium. EA's *Madden* series has finally adopted a fully polygonal guise. This transition has been handled remarkably well, and the game design surrounding the dramatic change has evolved in accordance. The N64 version is miles better than its PS brethren, but both efforts are qualified to enter the playoffs against Sony's *NFL Gameday '99* and Acclaim's *NFL Quarterback Club '99* this fall.

EA's presentation is still top-notch. The cool PS FMV intro shows select footage of sacks, incredible catches, and pounding running attempts. Enter the menus (in either version) and you'll find a slightly complicated interface, but every conceivable option one might need as well as attractive presentation. Selecting options is infinitely simpler in the N64 version, due to the PlayStation's constant loading breaks. I'm talking about saving games, customizing teams, starting season play - everything.

Start playing, and you'll see that the N64 version again outshines the PS version. Frame rates are smoother, pixels are softened and filtered, and seams blend together. The N64 also runs the game in high-res, matching *QB Club's* stunning look (in still pics anyway). The polygons are a little low in both versions, however, resulting in deformed player hands and blocky legs. Sideline detail is also minimal, but the stadiums (especially domes) are rendered extremely well in both versions.

N64 Version



Take a look at the new 3D player models. As you can see, EA has been slightly conservative with minute details to maintain the gorgeous high-res mode. The polygon count is somewhat low, but the effect is incredible!



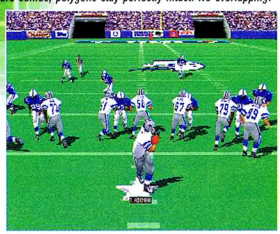
Despite the corpulent polygons, one can't help but get excited over the 3D players in Madden '99. Classic Madden plays never looked so good!





PS Version

Take-downs such as this are now meticulously detailed. As players collide, polygons stay perfectly intact. No overlapping!



Enough tech talk. *Madden '99* features some of the most satisfying player contact in any football game ever. The collisions are beyond tight. A monster running back like Bettis or Sanders can plow through the middle behind a center blocker, bouncing off defenders like a pinball as they attempt to stop the juggernaut. You'll only go down once a defender clearly has a hold, and then an intense, highly animated drag-down sequence occurs. It doesn't feel like previous *Maddens*, in which wild glancing tackles would pummel your back or receiver for no apparent reason. The passing control and execution is also right on the money. The ball will find your open receiver, even if he's almost completely surrounded, thanks to spot-on detection in and around players.

Madden has serious competition this year, but I think EA's game is strong. However, here's my advice: On PS, *Gameday '99* edges out *Madden '99*. The presentation is cleaner, and the gameplay's a little tighter. On N64, Madden '99 approaches perfection. QB Club '99 will have to put up one hell of a fight. Go on now, buy those pigskin games before the season starts!

	Playstation	Nintendo 64
■ APPRECIATE THE NEW ANIMATION AND PLAY-MECHANICS ■ COLLISIONS ARE EXTREMELY PRECISE AND SATISFYING ■ PS VERSION IS INFERIOR TO N64 (GRAPHICS&GAMEPLAY) ■ PLAYERS NEED EXTRA POLYGONS, BUT THEY MOVE WELL	B	A-

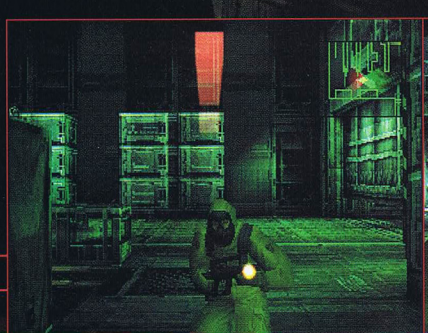
REPUBLIC SAYS... MADDEN'99 IS AN EXTREMELY SOLID, EXCITING FOOTBALL GAME. AS AN UPDATE, IT DESTROYS LAST YEAR'S. THE N64 VERSION IS REALLY, REALLY GOOD. BUY IT!

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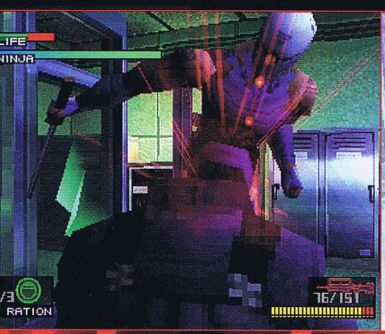
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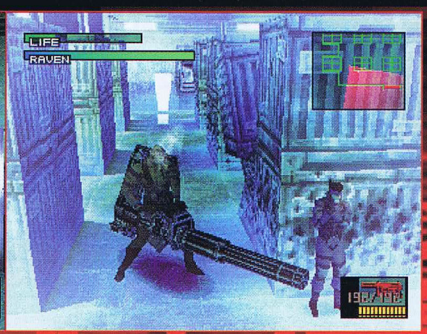
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WORLD REPUBLIC

August has been an eventful month for the import gaming scene. We're all excited about *Genso Suikoden II*, which is shaping up to be one legendary sequel. On the flip side, anime fans must come to terms with another *Lupin* let down. Nintendo 64 fans, however, receive one of the best fighters yet for the system along with *Pokemon*, which surprised us all. It's all here in 14 pages of *The World Republic*!



A GREAT WAR ERUPTS ONCE AGAIN...

Suikoden makes its long-awaited return to the PlayStation. Expect another classic adventure!



It has been a while, but *Genso Suikoden* is still clear in many minds. A wonderful orchestration of sights and sounds that painted a fierce struggle to bring righteousness to a world blemished by tyrannical rule. A young man's growth from a mere adolescent to a commanding leader of a rebellion against his own father's army was told. The plot climaxed as a fatal battle between father and son ensued, and then ended when an oppressed army of 108 characters converged with fervor to beat back the iniquitous governing power, claiming victory. It was without question one of the finest role playing experiences on the PlayStation, and the sequel is sure to be even grander.

Much like a true sequel, the game is set in the same world as the original but takes place three years later. Once again, the plot line will revolve around an epic struggle between two warring states, and there will be 108 playable characters. Two previous members of the rebellion, Victor and Flick, are back, but we expect to see a host of new characters to appear in the final game; so far, a dog named Shiro and a hunter named Kisnin are both confirmed. Suffice it to say, the shots look amazing and this one is on the top of many lists here at *GR*.











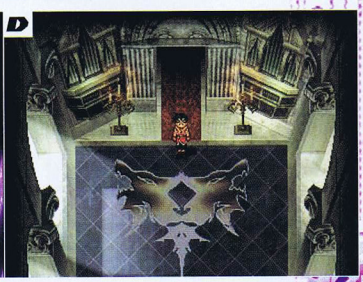
• developer/publisher **konami** • available in japan **4th quarter '98**

GENSO SUIKODEN II

(A) The familiar battle setup remains the same as your party (again just six characters at a time) faces off against creatures both new and old. (B,C&D) Each character can carry up to 3 crests; the original only allowed for one. Graphically, GS2 is looking mighty good.







Artwork ©KONAMI 1998



(Sequence A to D) ***Incredible spells and magic attacks, like the Jihad above, are available to your party providing you have extensive experience points and a beefed up inventory.***

• developer/publisher **quest** • available in japan **tba**

OGRE BATTLE 3

Editor's note: The Japanese title is still tentative and subject to change. We'll keep you posted when the title is finalized by Quest.

Nintendo 64 owners should feel privileged about the unveiling of Quest's tentatively titled *Ogre Battle 3*. The *Tactics Ogre* series has proved very successful in recent years with the SNES and PlayStation additions being best sellers in the West as well as Japan.

The story centers around Magnus, a lower-class member of the Southern regiment of the Pranthinus kingdom. Pranthinus is being oppressed by the fundamentalist country of Rhodis, which also threatens the entire continent of Zeteginea. Magnus witnesses an assault on the 2nd prince of Pranthinus by the disgruntled lower class townsfolk, and decides that the unrest needs to be quelled. In a bid to save his people's freedom, he pledges to bring peace and order back to his kingdom, and to end the oppression from Rhodis. The in-game action takes place in real time, unlike the previous incarnations of *OB*, replacing the hex, turn-based combat with exciting "realistic" battles. When enemies approach your party, the screen swoops into the combat environment, thus allowing for exceptional effects and graphical representation of the situations. Units can be given specific commands, so when enemies are encountered, it is important to instruct units to face the correct way, and to be backed up by correct troop styles. Gaining experience can aid in character development, allowing party members to change classes (occupations). Items specific to character class will also play an important role, enabling members to perform certain offensive or defensive actions. So with its new combat system and intriguing plotline, it seems that Nintendo 64 owners have a strategy based adventure game to brag about. It's about time. too.







(E&F) ***Spells like the Sonic Boom and Fire Storm are spectacular to watch.*** *(G)* ***The 3D field map allows easy navigation between locations.***



(H) ***Many detailed landscapes have been created for the game. This scene in the castle is also the setting for pics A to D.***





Artwork and Images ©QUEST 1998

INTERVIEW

ENIX REVEALS SECRET OF SUCCESS

Publicity Manager Mr. Hideki Yamamoto tells GR about the future of Enix...



BRAINS BEHIND BUST-A-MOVE

Mr. Hideki Yamamoto sits proudly in front of a large *Bust-A-Move* poster. Yet another successful and original game that is now typical of Enix's recent focus on unusual and alternative game genres.

Why has Enix shifted focus on the type of games they are releasing? Soccer sims, horse racing and dating games are quite different to the RPG's that we've been used to seeing.

It can't be helped that game companies are all making games that are similar, but Enix always tries to make games that other companies aren't doing. It's not just Enix who are making RPGs, everyone is making them. In order to make the best RPG we've got to be better than a lot of other RPGs, however, a dance game like *Bust a Move* hasn't been done before. So just by creating the first one, we'll automatically be the top one.

Some of Enix's early titles like *Act Raiser* would make excellent games for the new consoles. Why haven't these classics made a reappearance?

In the Japanese market there are a lot of sequels. They are very popular but that's both good and bad. If 1 was successful then make 2, if 2 is successful make a 3. Well, that's just business and from a creative point of view, you can do things that you wanted to do before but weren't able to. Obviously there are some users who like sequels and, if they are good, then I've got nothing against them. Certainly, there are many companies who do seem to make a lot of sequels but Enix doesn't and that's quite rare.

Did you approach Treasure to release *Yuke Yuke*?

We decided what game to do together but long before this we had had contact with Treasure many times. However, up to that point they'd only been doing Saturn games and that time Enix weren't doing Playstation or Saturn games, so we discussed the possibility of them producing an N64 game. The result of which was *Yuke Yuke*.

Will you be working with Treasure again in the future?

Of course. Yuke Yuke wasn't necessary just a one off. It's certainly possible that they could produce another game for us.

Recently we haven't heard any new N64 announcements. Are you still developing N64 games?

At the moment we aren't creating any N64 games at all. That doesn't mean that we won't create any N64 soft ever again. If the N64 market conditions change, then we would consider producing N64 games again.

Have you considered making a game just for the American market?

First of all we consider the Japanese market. Recently, there have been some companies who have considered the American market first, but from a creative point of view, that's difficult to do. First we consider the Japanese players and if after that we could improve the game and make it acceptable to the American market, then we would probably release it there as well.

What do you think are the biggest differences between the American and Japanese markets?

Well, Japanese kids love deformed and cute characters while American's prefer more realistic characters. Action games are more popular in America while in Japan RPGs are more common. Also, American gamers prefer much harder games compared to Japanese players. In addition, value for money is very important in America as well. I get the impression that if they can't play a game for a long time, they aren't happy, while in Japan even if a game is short, as long as it was enjoyable to play, they don't mind.

What are your opinions of the Dreamcast system?



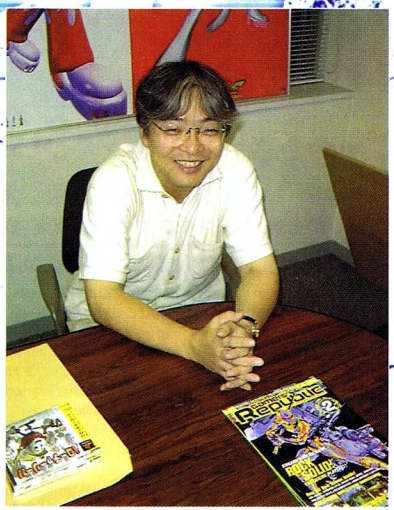
"Value for money is very important in America as well. I get the impression that if they can't play a game for long time, they aren't happy, while in Japan, even if a game is short, as long as it was enjoyable to play, they don't mind."



A PUBLISHING FORCE

Although Enix is a name behind many forms of entertainment media, they are best known for publishing high quality console videogames, and as the pioneers of "traditional" RPGs with their smash-hit, *Dragon Quest*.

"Enix isn't really concerned about hardware specifications. We'll make the best game we can that's possible on any machine. Market share is the most important."



Certainly the Dreamcast is a very high performance machine with an impressive specification. However, just like the N64, simply having great hardware doesn't mean that you'll be able to gain a large share of the market. As with the N64, just because we aren't producing software now doesn't mean we won't ever. We'll just wait and watch how the market develops.

What are you opinions on the CD versus cartridge debate?

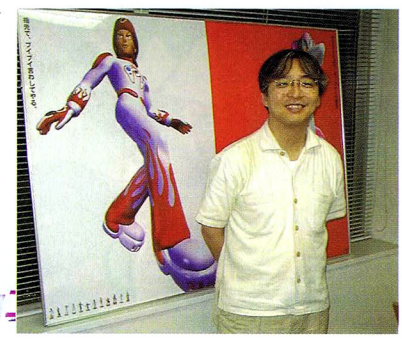
There are both good and bad points for each. Currently, we're only using CDs. Cart memory is very small and the production costs are high. At the end of the SFC era a cart was about 11,400 yen. That was very expensive for the user, but any cheaper than that and the maker won't be able to make a profit. The ROM was expensive and the more you used the more expensive it became. However, on the other hand, access to the CD during the game is slow, so in this respect the cart is better.

If you decided to produce another N64 game again, would you rather use the 64DD?

From a purely technical point of view, the 64DD is the best, I think, but if you consider the whole business model then - if the main hardware only has a million units - then the 64DD is only likely to sell around 100,000 units. There's no point making a game that would only sell so few. To tell the truth, Enix isn't really concerned about hardware specifications. We'll make the best game we can that's possible on any machine. Market share is the most important.

Does this mean you're going to concentrate on the Playstation from now on?

Inside Japan at least, considering the current market conditions, for the time being the Playstation is our main platform.



Will Enix ever develop a title themselves, or have you considered purchasing a development team to work for you?

We don't have any plans to raise an in-house development team. We prefer to support and assist developers outside of Enix. We're a publishing house, we have game producers and mangers, but all the programmers and graphic designers are either freelance or working in small companies.

How many game titles do you currently have in production?

We have over 10 titles currently in production, although we can't reveal what they are presently. This is the largest number of games we've had in production at the same time, but this will continue to increase.

Recently, ENIX announced a new anime project, but is software still your core business?

Not really, we don't have any core business any more. We have games, publishing, goods and anime as well. Software is a little hit and miss as to when a game will be released. One year our software sells really well and it's number one with publishing, number two, etc. Other years, the software is delayed or does badly in which case publishing is number one. All of these business enterprises are important to Enix.

Who would you say are you main game users, and do you create your games specifically for them?

I guess that the main are junior high school students, 13 to 14 year old boys. However, we don't create games just for them. We make games that we think are interesting. Obviously, some companies analyze the market and produce games aimed at a certain group of users, but in this way, although they'll be able to make a product that will cover their costs, they'll never make a truly excellent game that could become a million seller.

***Gamers' Republic* would like to thank Mr.Hideki Yamamoto for his time. Look elsewhere in this issue for details on Enix's latest console offerings.**

BRAINS BEHIND BUST-A-MOVE

(A) *Astronoka* is a game about farming in space, and features a wacky looking main character. (B) In *Greatest Hits* you edit music video clips, and gather fans with your top-ten hits. (C) As one of the greatest looking PlayStation games to date, *Bust a Move* has you following the beat in this "dance fighting game." (D) *Star Ocean* is the much anticipated sequel to the SFami epic RPG. (E) *Hello Charlie* is a rendered game about an...egg. Really!

A



B



C



D



E





LIVING GRAFFITI THREATENS TOWN!

Finally! A Nintendo 64 Fighter With All the Show and All the Go! Rakuga Kids Is Destined for Import Fame!





In a category that desperately needs innovation, Vs. Fighting, *Rakuga Kids*, at the very least, will provide the comic relief. If you're as prone to wacky Japanese fair as I am, *Rakuga Kids* should be your next import purchase. The designers at Konami had a good... no, a great idea, probably while playing *Parrapa*, and have crafted a splendid diorama fighter starring a truly wacky cast of characters. To make a long story short, eight ancient crayons fall into the hands of three groups of kids. These magical crayolas mysteriously bring any graffiti the kids draw to life. Unfortunately, the nice kids who unearthed them get rolled by two, shall we say, shady factions, and Twinkle Town is turned on its ear over night. Now it's up to the Tinkle kids that found the sacred crayon box to defeat the monstrous creations, and the kids that drew them, and return peace to Twinkle Town.

Fighting, in my eyes, continues to be one of the most abused genres in gaming. How can there be so many titles and so few truly memorable ones? If not for Capcom, SNK (although I'm not looking forward to *Fatal Fury 25 The Golden Years*) and Namco, this would be an extremely thin category. Games like *Rakuga Kids* are what's needed to balance things out. Adopting everything that makes 2D fighting so addicting - precise collision, a sensible combo system, *SF*-like controls, ingenious tunes, and inspired character designs - *Rakuga* brings diorama gaming to new heights. OK, so it's the only one. The paper thin *Parrapa*-like





(A) Check out those hot diorama! Even the select screen is cool!(B) The place you need to save... Twinkle Town (C) The wackiest supers in all of gamedom can be found right here! All of this is spectacularly animated by the way...

• *developer/publisher* **konami** • *available in japan* **now**

RAKUGAKIDS

characters and inspired locales are expertly drawn and rich in parallax, with interpolated 3D objects, vibrant color, and warping floors. The characters themselves (of which you will find none more demented) feature stunning animation and a quiver of super moves unlike any you have ever seen or imagined. The game play is fast, fluid, and fun, and the music, for a 64 game, is excellent. The sad thing is that *Rakuga Kids* will likely tank in Japan where the 64 is neck and neck with the Saturn (they're both miles behind Sony) and there are no current plans to release it here. So, as much a skilled fighter as an awesome collectors item, I highly recommend *Rakuga* as an import purchase. ⚡

B



C







• developer **try-Ace** • publisher **enix** • available in japan **now**

STAR OCEAN THE SECOND STORY

The quality found in Enix's first 32-bit RPG is nearly unmatched...

It's nice to have Enix back. Sure, they've released a few 32-bit titles, but I missed that company who once would contract such incredible talent, developers who were so close to brilliance that their games demanded you took notice. Quintet, Chun Soft, Produce, try-Ace - aside from Square, these are the teams who created some of the greatest Super Famicom/SNES RPGs ever made, and all of their games shared one thing in common, the Enix label. Thankfully though, with this new release and the unveiling of their upcoming Dragon Quest VII, it looks like Enix might finally work their old publishing magic on 32-bit as well.

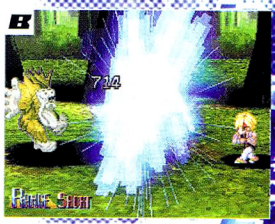
Star Ocean: The Second Story is try-Ace's sequel to their incredibly good, but incredibly ill-timed, Super Famicom RPG. While the original game might have come a bit too late in the SFami's life to make a huge impact (the PlayStation was already long out), it had nearly unsurpassed graphics, beautiful music, totally original battles, and a long and intricate quest - enough features to make even the most jaded 32-bit gamer take notice - yet apparently not enough for them to purchase it. In fact, *Star Ocean* did so poorly in sales, the chance of a sequel should have died along with the system it was made for. Thankfully though, Enix had other ideas.

In the attempt to make the second *Star Ocean* stand out on 32-bit as much as the original did on the generation before, it's quite apparent try-Ace didn't pull any punches. With the help of Links, one of the many (many, many, many) CG houses that helped create *FFVII*, you'll find most of the backgrounds are second in quality only to Square's epic RPG. Towns vibrate with color and design, outdoor scenes couldn't look any more lush, and the 30+ minutes of animated computer cinemas need to be experienced to believe. The overall look is impressive as well, and using about the last possible character/background combination left for 32-bit RPGs, Second Story have you maneuvering a hand-drawn sprite around pre-rendered backdrops. What makes this so special though, is that this game seems to utilize some sort of software filtering, allowing the character to scale in and out without any major pixilation. And then when all the smaller details are added, such as birds that fly overhead and the reflections in water, I couldn't have asked for a better visual experience.

Thankfully, Second Story share more than just the high graphical quality its predecessor was known for. As an RPG, this new *Star Ocean* is just as playable as the first, complete with the same incredibly quick battle system. Everything happens in "real time," you control one character and pick your attack by using different buttons, and watch him go. The other members of your party can be taken control of at any time, or you can just let them attack and cast spells on their own - thankfully the AI seems competent.

I just hope I get a chance to talk about the other features this game holds in the future, when we review the American version - not that one has been announced yet, but an RPG this good just needs a domestic release. A-

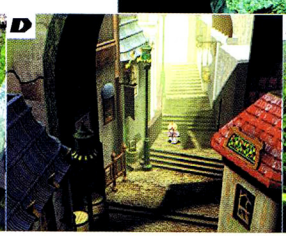


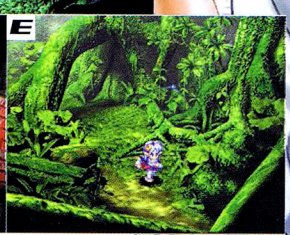


(A) Mountain fights have boulders that roll into the battlefield, damaging all they touch. (B) Incredible spell effects can be found throughout.









(C to E) The detail in some of the rendered backgrounds even surpass the mighty FFVII at times...

STAR OCEAN THE SECOND STORY™

Artwork and Images © tri-Ace Inc, ·LINKS· Minato Koio ·ENIX 1998





Capcom's latest fighter comes blazing to the PlayStation in the form of the immensely popular Justice Schools (a.k.a. *Rival Schools: United by Fate*). As five different high schools take on each other in a blinding flurry of fists and hard-hitting action, Capcom decided to include exclusive PlayStation material on an entirely separate CD known as the Evolution disc. This gives you the opportunity to custom build your very own fighter, send him/her through some tough semesters at school, and train in the ways of fighting. Additional are a number of subgames based around the various sporting characters found within *Justice Schools*. You are able to play soccer, volleyball and baseball (albeit in a very simplified fashion) in order to further build your fighters skills. Evolution mode was promoted heavily in Japan to suck the punters in, but in actual fact, it provides you with a splendid addition to an already superb game. In its raw form, *Justice Schools* is excellent fun both in a technical and playable sense. Introducing exciting, new characters, the game's main difference to others of the genre is that you select two fighters for each battle. By way of power moves and special team supers, you are able to pull your teammate into the fray, and perform some truly spectacular acts of violence on your opponents. Between rounds, you are also able to change characters, which means you need to master more than just a few of the fighters to become successful. *Justice Schools* features 20 3D characters (including Sakura from the *Alpha* and *EX* series), and a whole host of beautiful hand drawn art and enjoyable storylines. While the polygon models can become rather ugly at close quarters, the flow and speed of the fights are just breakneck, and presumably this is the reason why Capcom opted for slightly less detailed fighters. The mechanics of the game can be likened to *X-Men* and *SF*, incorporating huge jumps, ariel combos, supers and taunts. What more of a recommendation does this need? *Justice Schools* is simply hardcore. **B+**

• developer/publisher **capcom** • available in japan **now**

JUSTICE SCHOOLS

PlayStation

Fight your classmate chums in Capcom's latest arcade port

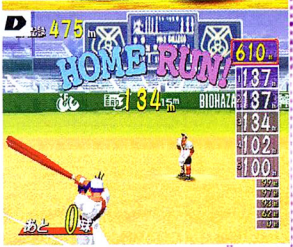












(A to D) Practice all manner of school sports to improve and develop your custom characters fighting skills. Four different events with varying difficulty await you!

Artwork and Images © CAPCOM 1998

• developer **gamearts** • publisher **esp** • available in japan **now**

LUNAR 2 ETERNAL BLUE

The classic Sega CD RPG is back, with a bit more than just new graphics...





The original *Lunar: Eternal Blue* couldn't have been released at a worse time. In similar circumstances, this RPG appeared in both Japan and America incredibly close to the Sega CD's death, at a period when most people had already given up on this failed add-on. It's really too bad, though, as almost anyone who's experienced this incredible title will admit, *Lunar: EB* was truly one of the greatest 16-bit RPGs ever made. And now, almost as a tribute to the original release, the remake of this incredible RPG finally appears, ironically just as the Saturn is about to share a similar fate as the system that preceded it.

Of course, this isn't the first *Lunar* remake to hit the Saturn. *Lunar: Silver Star Story* was released last year, touting not only completely redrawn graphics, but also totally new storyline aspects and music. And while *Lunar 2: Eternal Blue* acquires much more than just the added "2" to its title, the upgrades are no where near as expansive as what the original received.



This isn't a bad thing, though. The reasoning behind the major storyline changes for *Silver Star Story* was that Game Arts were never truly pleased with the script behind *Lunar: The Silver Star*. They always felt it could have been handled better, and this was their chance to do it. For *Lunar: EB*, on the other hand, GA took their time and produced exactly what they wanted, and never saw any need to drastically alter the mood of the game.

But to vindicate the re-release of a game that the developers had always seen as near perfection, *Lunar 2* would need more than just updated graphics and new FMV; elements that would provide a new experience were a necessity. *Lunar 2* received this from the addition of the map system found in *Silver Star's* remake, allowing you to see enemies before they attack, which caused nearly every dungeon to be totally redesigned, although not always for the better. The Haunted mansion, for example, now resides on the top of a hill, and resembles more of a single story shack than the impressive structure it once was. Thankfully, though, aside from a couple of these areas looking a bit lacking to the original versions, most of the old locations have benefited from the 32-bit upgrade - and there's even a few totally new places to boot.

In addition to the change in dungeons, the newly re-colored graphics are a nice touch. Done in the same style of *Silver Star Story*, every screen is now packed with lush visuals that still retain their 16-bit roots. The FMV, on the other hand, is greatly improved from the last Saturn *Lunar*. Now full screen, these professionally created and beautiful animation scenes are some of the best quality I've ever seen on Sega's 32-bit system, perhaps with the exception of *Tengai Makyo IV*.

The best part about this new version of *Lunar 2* being released is that there aren't any more re-makes for Game Arts to hide behind (this is the 3rd game in the series they've helped port to the Saturn), that is, of course, unless we see them again on Dreamcast... I only pray *Lunar 3* is on the way.

B+







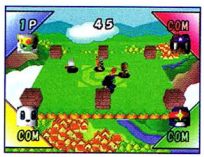




(A) As in the last Lunar Saturn remake, you won't be attacked outdoors (B) old locations get an update (C) spells are much more impressive this time around

SUPER B-DAMAN *by Hudson*

Based on Bombermen-type characters from Hudson, B-daman 64 is the latest release to follow the current trend of toys becoming video games. B-daman figures can shoot marbles long distances, and so the game has 4-player action where you try and knock your opponents out of an arena. Single-player mode sees you aiming at dinosaurs' mouths, and other strangeness in an attempt to win all 64 special marbles. Also utilizing the 64GB, this game will probably never catch on in the



U.S., but it certainly a very unique experience. Not recommended unless, unless you plan to move to Japan.






As a devoted *Resident Evil* fan, I almost feel that *Deep Fear* should offend me. Here we have a game that so blatantly rips off Capcom's horror title, it's almost embarrassing. Yet, all I feel is pity. How, may I ask, can a title that has stolen so much material suck so badly?

Deep Fear starts out fine. As a member of the ERS (Emergency Rescue Service), you've been assigned to assist the Navy in a deep sea salvage mission, to recover an probe that has fallen from space. Residing 20,000 feet under the surface in the Big Table, an underwater habitat similar to the one found in *The Abyss*, your days are filled with little action, until the sub guarding the area slams into the sea floor. It seems that whatever the Navy found in that item of interest has escaped...

The basic idea behind *Deep Fear's* gameplay is simple: you're trapped in an underwater environment, surrounded by zombie-like beasts of various shapes and sizes, and it's up to you and your trusty weapons to make it out alive. While the setting and storyline might be unique, everything else will seem quite familiar to *Resident Evil*. You've got polygon characters on a pre-rendered background, similar types of beasts to kill, and sound effects that were seemingly lifted straight from the title it so shamelessly copies. Strangely enough, the only thing Sega seemed to forget while pillaging *Resident Evil* is what made it so great in the first place - the emotions it produces. Ironically, *Deep Fear* delivers none of what the title proclaims.



I think I was 20 minutes into *Deep Fear* when I had three weapons at my disposal. Between these I had a total of 185 bullets. When you take into account that most enemies take only a few hits to kill, and you can refill these guns at any weapon station (which are in a prominent part of each level), a good part of the game's challenge suddenly disappears. In theory, you can clear out the large levels quite easily by just killing everything you see, running back to the re-fill station whenever needed, and repeating. Healing items are the same way: you can hold eight at a time, and your supply can be replenished at a single location an unlimited amount of times. To their credit, Sega tried to add a sense of urgency by putting "time limits" on how long certain rooms would have breathable air, but even this fails in practice, thanks to your air mask, which can keep you going for several minutes - even though you won't be in these rooms for more than a few seconds. Even their attempts at startling the player really doesn't work - my favorite being humans that suddenly turn into monsters. Cool idea, if it didn't happen every time I completed a function in a room with a human standing there. (Ok, I'll flip the switch and...oh no! Monster!) After the fifth time, it just got silly.

The worst part of *Deep Fear* is actually its greatest asset, the voice acting. Besides the fact this is yet another aspect taken directly from *Resident Evil*, the acting in this game is so bad, it makes the folks of the Stars Team seem like thespians. Really. You have to play this game at least once just for the voices - it's hilarious.

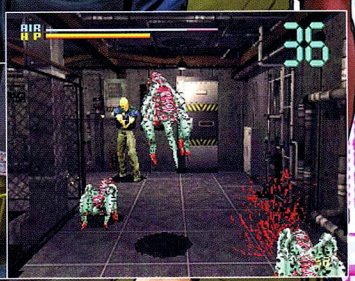
While apparently *Deep Fear* was Sega's attempt to combine both *Resident Evil* and *The Abyss*, they failed on both counts. The game is only similar to these influences on the surface, but deep down it's just another sub-standard (and often boring) title just trying to leach off *RE's* success. A decent attempt, but I was hoping for much more from Sega's latest, and perhaps last, major Saturn release. **C**



• developer **sega** • publisher **sega** • available in japan **now**

DEEP FEAR





• developer/publisher **squaresoft** • available **now**

BRAVE FENCER

Square combine action and role playing as only they can... But wait for the U.S. release on this one!

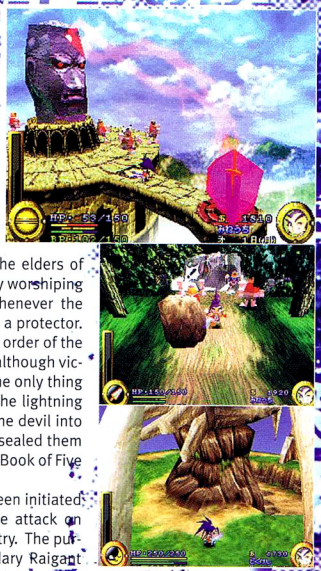


(A) Musashi is interrupted by a sentry and tosses him quickly into the abyss. The little guy can throw!
(B) This elder will actually let you meet everyone you have rescued. Shake them down for valuable clues... It'll be nice to read them one day!

Many years ago, In the Le Coarl Empire, an enormous devil made up entirely of the mineral binchotite appeared out of nowhere. This "devil of darkness" effortlessly destroyed the empire and then headed for the neighboring country of Yaikunik to obtain more binchotite, the abundant natural resource in the kingdom. People say there was nothing left after the devil passed through Yaikunik and that it affected every living creature it came in contact with, causing the generation of many evil deities.

Upon receiving the news of the advancing devil, the elders of Yaikunik made a decree to summon a protector, and by worshiping the Binchotite stone (which is traditionally used whenever the country is in a crisis), the queen was able to summon a protector. As the protector, Musashi set out to slay the entity, by order of the queen. Musashi and the devil had a furious fight, but although victorious, Musashi could not utterly defeat the devil. The only thing he could do was to seal it away using the power of the lightning sword, Raigant. Musashi then divided the power of the devil into four elements - earth, water, fire, wind, and sky - and sealed them with a sacred crest. These five elements comprise The Book of Five Rings.

Many years have passed, and military action has been initiated once again as the Le Coarl Empire makes a surprise attack on Yaikunik. Both the king and queen are out of the country. The purpose of the surprise attack is to retrieve the legendary Raigant Sword. Yaikunik military forces are unable to cope with Le Coarl's sweeping army, and they have advanced close to Yaikunik castle. Senior council members inside the castle decide to summon the protector, as their final hope to save the kingdom, again...



Square certainly know how to tell a story, and although *Brave Fencer Musashiden* consists of predominantly real-time action and adventure gaming, storytelling is in effect here as much it has been in any thoroughbred Square RPG, which leads me to the sad news for import game buyers: *Brave Fencer* is an extremely task based game. Many an import game can be cracked by simply talking to everybody (sometimes twice) or progressing to obvious points on a map. In *Brave Fencer,* however, townsfolk will ask you to carry out detailed tasks down to a certain time and place. Without a fair grasp of the Japanese language or lots of trips online, you will find yourself hideously stuck throughout this fine game. I must have called on our Japanese editor (Ka-Jun!) ten times in the eight hours or so that I bravely fought the gijeen protection. I finally realized after defeating the second boss that *Brave Fencer* was going to be such an event-filled action/rpg that I'd be better off experiencing the full U.S. version, and so I reluctantly stopped playing. Here's what I can tell you based on what I've experienced so far: Do not judge this game based on the Japanese demo (if you have it), as it builds steadily and gets a lot better after "Scenario 2." Prepare for long epic boss encounters, lots of adventure style antics interspersed with equal amounts of platforming and exploration, and if you buy import music CDs, make a mad dash to the phone, as this BFM's one of Square's more memorable recent soundtracks. Aside from that, start looking forward to its U.S. debut in November. We'll of course have lots more as the U.S. translation takes shape.





(C) The very first boss encounter in Brave Fencer drags on for minutes and covers many screens, as this formidable beast runs for cover while mounting violent attacks.

If you are still hell-bent on playing through the import, there are some redeeming qualities about this purchase. Besides beautiful packaging (double case with a collectable card and full color manual) *Brave Fencer* has a companion CD packed in with a playable demo of *FF8* and *Erghiez*. So when you're pulling your hair out in frustration, you can always pop in one of these and blow off some steam. The *FF8* demo will make you yearn deeply for its delivery. The waiting begins...

CODE R *by Quintet*

During the 16-bit days, Quintet could do little wrong. With titles such as Act Raiser, Soul Blazer, Illusion of Gaia, and Tenchi Sozo under their belts, it's with little wonder this company was recognized as not only one of Enix's most popular teams, but one of the Super Famicom's more popular developers in general. Then came the world of 32-bit, and with it Quintet's separation from Enix. It's funny how once-great smaller companies seem to flounder on their own. First, it was the quickly forgettable Solo



Crisis, and now we have Code R. More than just a bit abstract to their creation-themed titles of old, Quintet's latest release puts you in the role of a hip Japanese youth, who's only obsession in life is to race his car up and down the dangerous hills of Japan. Anyway, the graphics really suck, and the game's not that fun to play. Well, there's a kinda cool replay mode and...my god. Quintet, what the hell happened to you? D

• developer/publisher **hudson** • available in japan **now**

B.L.U.E LEGEND OF WATER

PlayStation

Hudson try their hand at underwater adventure with soothing results





Just the ticket for the sweltering summer heat, Hudson's *b.l.u.e. Legend of water* is one of those weird Japanese games that will probably never come out here, but it provides a very unique play experience. In *b.l.u.e.*, you play as Maia, sort of an aquatic you-know-who with short red hair. Spending the majority of the game underwater, you'll team with Luka, a cute little dolphin who can be commanded by applying one of several AI routines to it. Together, you'll solve many an underwater puzzle and explore a wealth of incredibly glitchy environments.

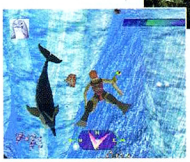
Apart from the undersea action, Maia can also interact with many different characters in the *Resident Evil* style interior sections. Moving a cursor over "hot spots" allows you to move to or examine different areas gaining valuable information and items for use later. The graphics in these scenes are acceptable with decent backgrounds, but the characters have joints that can't decide if they exist in this universe or not. And unfortunately, the bulk of the action, the real time underwater stuff, is strictly first generation all the way. There are seams and draw-in the likes of which few mortals have ever encountered.

But even with ugly graphics, I still found myself drawn in by *b.l.u.e.* Its pleasant musical score and laid back gameplay were most soothing. Be warned, though, that there's quite a lot of Japanese text - a fact that caused me to get stuck a few times. I can only recommend it to the more serious import shopper. C+









(A) Interact with others in Resident Evil-like interior locations (B) Your dolphin can be controlled with simple AI commands.

• developer/publisher **hudson** • available in japan **now**

LUPIN!

We're not in Castle Cagliostro anymore... Lupin falls victim to game mediocrity once again...

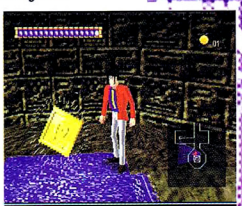
Why is it that one of the coolest Japanese anime stars always gets the short end of the stick when it comes to video games? I mean, what more could a designer ask for? *Lupin* has a great cast of characters and tons of amazing stories already in place. He even drives around (well, he's usually being chased) in a righteous little Mini Car for those opportunistic 3D driving scenarios. However, as bad as, or perhaps worse than, his 2D crap-fest on the Super Famicom, *Lupin* falls prey to perhaps the single worst 3D engine ever to appear on the Saturn. We're talkin' like, *Ghen War* looks like a gem next to this heap. But, it is still *Lupin*. And as a big *Lupin* fan I will struggle through every inch of it for its few cool aspects, such as the decent skills *Lupin* has like dodging attacks and creeping about, excellent anime cut scenes, and the very cool soundtrack that mimics the feel of the show perfectly. This pain I will endure. At least they could have given me a camera! Like *MM Dash*, one must turn the backgrounds with the shoulder buttons. The humanity! Unless you really dig *Lupin*, stay miles away from this car wreck of a 3D game. D+















(A) The Lupin model is actually ok looking. The enemies, however, leave much to be desired. (B) Bust out glass and loot the place! (C) When the alarm sounds, Lupin's sidekicks come to the rescue!

• developer/publisher **sega** • available in japan **now**

WACHENRODER

A cool soundtrack and unique theme make Wachenroder stand out...

Normally when I frequent the land of strategy RPGs I lock myself into a trance of concentration. *Shining Force 3*, for instance, kills time at unprecedented speeds. With *Wachenroder*, I entered a realm of extremely cool "new-type" RPG concepts and art design, priming my gaming spirit for another journey into contended solitude. Ha! Instead, I've been crushed by mundane gameplay!

It's all true. *Wachenroder* contains some truly stunning artwork. Gorgeous renders run rampant from intros to intermissions, flanked by remarkable hand drawn, brush stroked images soaked in lavish detail. A beautiful, superbly composed score blesses each screen with incredible ambience and atmosphere rarely heard in strategy RPGs. And then suddenly the reality of real time comes mercilessly streaking through the facade, robbing me of all hope. I discover average 3D landscape graphics and a clunky, unresponsive menu system. Still, I searched deeper. It's a Sega-made strategy RPG after all. There had to be another silver lining beyond those luscious static pics and incredible music tracks. Cool attacks maybe? No, and the 3D close-up battle graphics are poor - definitely along the lines of *Shining Force 3*, just a dozen times rougher. Alright, I told myself, good games should transcend weak visuals. I played and I prayed for more. Give me good battle scenarios, creative plot lines, unique enemy placement and A.I., just throw me a freakin' bone here! No, it's all just a little better than average, over and over again.

So, as I recover from such turmoil, here's my honest recommendation: Pick up *Wachenroder* if you have bizarre shallow urges like me. I'll still own it, because of the pretty pictures and cool soundtrack, but there's really not much of a gaming experience here when compared to highly involving (and playable) imports like *SF3 Scenario 2*. Speaking of which, I still need to beat *Scenario 2* before *3* appears on September 15. My save game wiped clean at the last battle. Ouch! B-



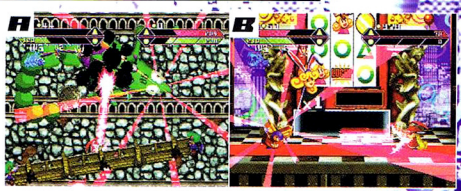


• developer/publisher **hudson** • available in japan **now**

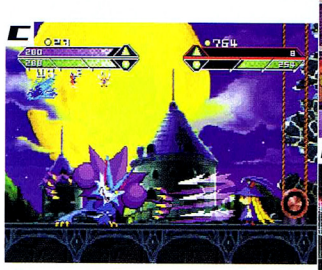
SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

Treasure's unforgettable 2D masterpiece hits the PlayStation in high style!

Seeing as how the Saturn version of Treasure's *Silhouette Mirage* was one of the greatest 2D platformer-shooters ever, and at the same time highly underrated due to the Saturn's slow demise, *Reprogrammed Hope* (as it is subtitled in Japan) is indeed just that for U.S. PlayStation owners who will enjoy every inch of the game, minus a few background effects, this fall when Working Designs releases *Silhouette Mirage* here. Treasure have reprogrammed *Silhouette Mirage* in house, skillfully maneuvering this vast 2D gem of a game into the PlayStation's unwilling 2D gullet. How they've managed to squeeze in all but a layer of mist and a touch of parallax, I do not know. *Silhouette Mirage* not only encompasses some of the finest Japanese character designs ever assembled, but some of the most inspired play mechanics as well. The concept of the Silhouette and Mirage is brilliant. Every enemy has one of the aforementioned sides, just like Sil, the little saucer eyed witch that you control. To destroy or defend against enemies, you must first identify whether they are Silhouette or Mirage. Using the same side will push enemies back and/or block their attacks, while using the opposite side will attack enemies. Defeating the spectral level enemies is a minor task compared to the outrageous end bosses, which require constant switching between your Silhouette and Mirage attacks. As a result, this game ends up being a character-based shooter with non-stop action and split-second strategy changes. *Silhouette Mirage* also features a wide variety of awesome effects as well as a truly energized soundtrack. In this case (a rarity) you'll actually be better served buying the U.S. version. The imaginative story is worth experiencing and the packaging should be quite spectacular. A



(A) Pyrotechnics abound! Dizzying amounts of action and effects fill the screen! (B) A silly game within the game - beat money out of this little fairy before moving on...







(C) He doesn't look like this when you first meet him... (D) A boss encounter you will never forget... really. (E) Treasure whips out the big guns!



Artwork and Images © TREASURE/ESP 1998

• developer/publisher **konami** • available in japan **now**

POINTER'S POINT 2

PlayStation



Konami's multiplayer extravaganza is back in style





Pointer's Point 2, KCET's sequel to last year's cult multiplayer hit, has arrived! We've heard from solid sources that a U.S. version of the game (to be called *Poy Poy 2*?) isn't among Konami of America's upcoming conversions. Perhaps the original didn't sell too well, or maybe this type of game doesn't exactly "fit" into their new line up of hard-core action and RPG titles. Either way, it's clear that the first *PP* had a dedicated audience. When *PP2* arrived at *GR*, surprised fans of the original were piping up left and right. Everyone seemed to think that they kick ass at this game. Needless to say,the multitap was quickly retrieved from its drawer, challenges were met, and soon hours melted away...

Pointer's Point 2 welcomes back almost every mischievous member of the original crew. There's Debuo, who survives the most punishing of attacks with high stamina, Dojiro the ninja, who blazes across the screen spreading havoc, and hard-cores like Apache who crush using the power of special weapons. In regards to special weapons, *PP2* has a giant list of unique powers to choose from before each fight begins. In combat, you pick up items scattered around the level to throw at opponents in various painful ways. By holding an item such as a log, boulder, or bomb, and triggering the special weapon, you'll convert the item into one of over a dozen powerful attacks. Homing glow balls, spread shots, teleportation, yo yo-like electric whips, energy fields, and spontaneous healing are among the best, while some, like the item dissolver, are apparently included for comedy value. Battle stages include a park, an extremely slippery iceberg, a desert (complete with quicksand center), moai ruins, and a modern stage loaded with wild lighting and hatching rock dinosaurs. Plenty of characters, piles of special weapons, and unique stages ensure *PP2's* lasting playability.

There's little more to say. Konami has made very few significant changes to the Pointer's Point formula, but the new characters and weapons easily suffice. Another round of fundamental multiplayer gaming is order, and the action is universally appealing across the board. **B**



NOTABLE RELEASE DATES

Here's a list of games from which to choose your next batch of imports. If it's not on the list, chances are it's either Pachinko, Horse racing, or worse...

PLAYSTATION

SEPTEMBER 3
Navit *ArtDink*
Metal Gear Solid *Konami*
SEPTEMBER 10
Dolphin's Dream *Konami*
Blue Breaker Burst *Human*
SEPTEMBER 17
Simulation RPG School *ASCII*
Toge Max *Atlus*
Bishibashi Special *Konami*
Spin Tail *Bandai*
SEPTEMBER 23
Itadaki Street Gorgeous King *Enix*
Capcom Generation 3 *Capcom*
Destrega *Koei*

SOMETIME IN SEPTEMBER
Become Pilot *Pack in Soft*
End Sector *Ascii*
Power League *Hudson*
Ralley de Africa *Prism Arts*
Beat Mania *Konami*

SATURN

SEPTEMBER 3
Slayers Royal 2 *ESP*
SEPTEMBER 17
Simulation RPG School *ASCII*
Genso Suikoden *Konami*
SEPTEMBER 23
Capcom Generation 3 *Capcom*
Shining Force III: pt 3 *Sega*
Steam Hearts *TGL*
Battle Ship Nadeshiko *Sega*

NINTENDO 64

SEPTEMBER 23
SD Hyryu no Ken 64 *Culture Brain*

• developer/publisher **riverhillsoft** • available in japan **now**

OVERBLOOD 2

PlayStation

Explore incredibly detailed environments in RiverHill's latest offering...





I almost liked the original *Overblood*. It was ambitious, had a great premise, and aside from about a million quirky graphical and gameplay shortcomings, was fun to play. Unfortunately, this anticipated sequel acquires many of these traits from the first, although the negatives are much easier to ignore this time.

Now consisting of two totally different "exploring" engines, in *Overblood 2* you'll either find yourself in the familiar (although much more enhanced) full polygonal mode when inside buildings, or on pre-rendered *Parasite Eve*-like backgrounds when walking around outside. Although the game cheats a bit by making everything letterboxed, both of these modes are very impressive, and feature tons of lighting and texture effects. The frame rate studders a bit when the polygon backgrounds are present, but it's easy to look past, especially when you consider how far you can see and the lack of any major pop-up. It's because *Overblood 2* looks this good, I can be a bit more lenient on the fact that, once again, it's not that fun to play. Much like the first game, you'll be wandering around for hours with little to do. The battles are still awkward, your character still moves like he doesn't touch the ground, and, although you're no longer faced with the red vest, it's apparent RiverHill still can't make a decent main character (what's with the Nash hair?).





One thing's for sure, RiverHill didn't skimp when it came to production costs: with tons of FMV and game graphic cinemas, along with hours of voice, *Overblood 2* comes off more like a movie than a game at times. Yet, thanks to the often-dull gameplay, this title resembles its mediocre predecessor more often than not, and ends up as yet another incredibly ambitious, but ultimately flawed RiverHill offering. **C+**



• developer/publisher **nintendo** • available in japan **now**

POKEMON STADIUM



Pickachu and friends invade the N64 and hopefully don't induce seizures this time.

The highly anticipated Nintendo combat game has finally arrived after an unbelievable amount of media hype. *Pokemon Stadium* is more than just an extension for the already phenomenally popular *Pokemon GameBoy* title, because it brings to life the little critters in true 64-bit glory. From initial boot-up, the player is cast into a virtual stadium environment where they can choose from 40 different monsters. Either three or six can then be used to battle against CPU or human opponents. The real skill comes in trying to predict which monsters your foe will use, and soon you will be skilled enough to match their choices with suitably appropriate selection of your own. Then the monsters do battle in the stadium, until someone loses all of the team. Each monster has up to four unique abilities and attacks, some offensive and some defensive. During a battle you are able to change monsters in order to counter moves thrown against you. The game mechanics are all very simple, but within the simplicity lies a deep, tactical game of bluffing and skill. Of course the main feature of *Pokemon Stadium* is the 64GB peripheral that comes bundled with the cartridge. This allows your GB Pokemon cart to be read by the N64 and thus allows any of the 151 monsters to be uploaded and used. Already huge in Japan, this game will undoubtedly catch on in our Western civilization, as it quite rightly should. Highly recommended. B





• developer/publisher **banpresto** • available in japan **now**

SUPER ROBOT SPIRITS

Famous Japanese robots battle it out in a Gundam-tastic type scenario on N64

In a surprise N64 "beat-em-up-that's-quite-good" type fashion, Banpresto have revamped all your favorite robots of old, and produced *Super Robot Spirits*. Featuring eight initial playable characters, you can choose from such famous mechs as Shining Gundam, VoltesV, Master Gundam and more. All the usual fighting modes are apparent, including Guts mode, which is a cool name for Survival mode. Robot graphics and animation are good but are unfortunately let down substantially by weak playing areas. Bland buildings and sepia tones make the battle arenas look fairly drab, but the plethora of moves and supers available to the players make up for any other discrepancies. *SRS* has a good story mode incorporating bog-standard anime robot plotlines, but it all comes together quite nicely in the end. The fighting engine is one of the best seen on the system, which up until *Rakuga Kids*, was not saying much at all. The D-pad provides control (but still seems stiff and clumsy) and the buttons allow combat to commence. Each robot can fight standing on terra firma or a few hundred feet in the air. This provides a distinct *Dragon Ball Z* feel to the overall proceedings but, overall, it feels good to play. Good two-player action is where *SRS* really hits the mark, so if you are struggling for a bit of the rough stuff, then check it out. C+





(A) Look at the size of that throbbing death missile of justice. SRS features many different insane Supers!







(B) The mighty flaming sword prepares to cleave an unsuspecting robot in two. (C) Distance yourself from these guys, otherwise your toast.

GUARDIAN FORCE *by Success*

There's no denying the power of a good 2-player shooter. Guardian Force, brought to you by the Cotton folks over at Success, is a solid, slightly unremarkable 2-player overhead shooter. Of course it doesn't have to be played by two, but a shooter like this, which just barely goes beyond average (into the domain of "solid"), can be played over and over by a couple of willing shooter fanatics quite easily. GF's major appeal comes from the fact that you control little tanks. You have



rotation controls for the turret (a la Mass Destruction), a main firing button, and a mega weapon that changes based on the power-up being used. Weapon effects are cool, the boss patterns are good and tough, and the graphically simplistic levels are fairly well designed. There's problems with tiny bullets, but eventually you'll bypass this through repetition and recognition. So yes, Guardian Force is worth the money. It's no Radiant Silvergun (ha!), but it's an intense little shooter to kill time between much better games.

C+

anime republic













Ruin Explorers: Prophets & Prophecies!
English Subtitled Version
60 minutes
Available now from A.D.V. Films
Reviewed by: Dave Halverson

Following the high quality of the first two episodes of *Ruin Explorers*, the final two see the return of the entire cast for a finale at sea and beyond that no anime aficionado should miss. There's even a pretty cool and rather unexpected surprise ending. First and foremost, though, *Ruin Explorers'* character designs are fetching saucer-eyed creations and the entire two-hour series is extremely rich in color and highly expressional, especially the cute little Wiggin, Tam. The producers have made the most of the time and budget allotted, and squeezed in very ample doses of fluid battles and clever lighting with a minimum of still scenes where all you see are fluttering lips (I hate those). Picking up where part one left off, *Ruin Explorers: Profits and Prophecies* features more tongue in cheek humor along with plenty of adventure, magic, sorcery and just a touch of romantic comedy, as Tam and Raja continue to fight over Prince Lyle. Gil and Galuff also reprise their roles, and they're as low down as ever. Of course, a bit of evil creeps in to keep things honest as well. *Ruin Explorers* isn't exactly deep, or heavy in terms of story line and you'll never get lost in any plot twists, but for what it is - swashbuckling anime fare - it's about as good as it gets. If you liked *Gunsmith Cats* amd *Burn-UpW* you'll no doubt find *Ruin Explorers* quite appealing. Looking back, I only wish that it was more than a mere four episodes (on two tapes) long. Hey, *Burn UpW* is making a come back, so maybe someday... I highly recommend this series. **B+**













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Dirty Pair Flash
English Language Version
90 minutes
Available now from A.D.V. Films
Reviewed by: Bryn Williams

The Lovely Angels are back with a vengeance in this, the latest installment of high-jinks from director Tomomi Mochizuki. This time, the notorious girls are assigned to protect a fellow agency member while he tries to uncover and solve a crime committed on Worlds World, a planet-sized theme park. The theme park recreates the 20th century perfectly, even down to the crimes and sleazy individuals that inhabited Earth back in the day. While on their mission, Kei and Yuri encounter cross-dressing maniacs, insane robots, haunted houses, conartists and deadly computer viruses. Of course, all these ingredients make for an action-packed ninety minutes of wise-cracks, explosions and bad jokes, but hey, that's what makes it fun! The volume contains three episodes, and the *Dirty Pair* series continues in the same sexy, witty style as previous episodes. Unfortunately, it must be said that the dubbed American voices are extremely irritating, but if you can ignore this, then you will be able to appreciate the rather good animation and story lines within. **B-**













Peacock King: Castle of Illusion
English Language Version
58 minutes
Available now from CPM

Reviewed by: Mike Griffin

This hour long *Peacock King* movie pre-dates the well known multi-episode series. *PK: Castle of Illusion* moves at a great pace. Kujaku and spectral mage Onimaru battle the sinister Six of Eight Angels as they attempt to resurrect the demon lord in the Castle of Illusion. Along the way, you'll witness several pockets of brilliant action. That's really what keeps this anime alive. One cool action scene follows the Angels' attack on a monk temple. The animation is spectacular as they dart between trees at amazing speeds, firing searing magical blades into (and through) the hapless temple guards. Despite a slightly dated look, *PK:COI* offers a solid hour of bloody action.











SIN
In Development now
Available 1999 from
A.D.V. Films

Here's a pleasant turn of events... For the first time ever, an American bred PC game is becoming a modern day Japanese anime, to be drawn and animated in Japan (by none other the Sonoda Kenichi of *Bubblegum Crisis* and *Gunsmith Cats* fame), based on an original story by Ritual Software and distributed by ADV Films! *SIN*, an awesome looking new 3D first-person shooter (you can read all about it in this issue) follows the story of John Blade, a member of the Hardcorps, a government security force implemented some 40 years into the future. It's a long and very intriguing story, and judging by these fantastic character designs, the anime will be just as involving. More soon...







BUBBLEGUM CRISIS



GUNSMITH CATS

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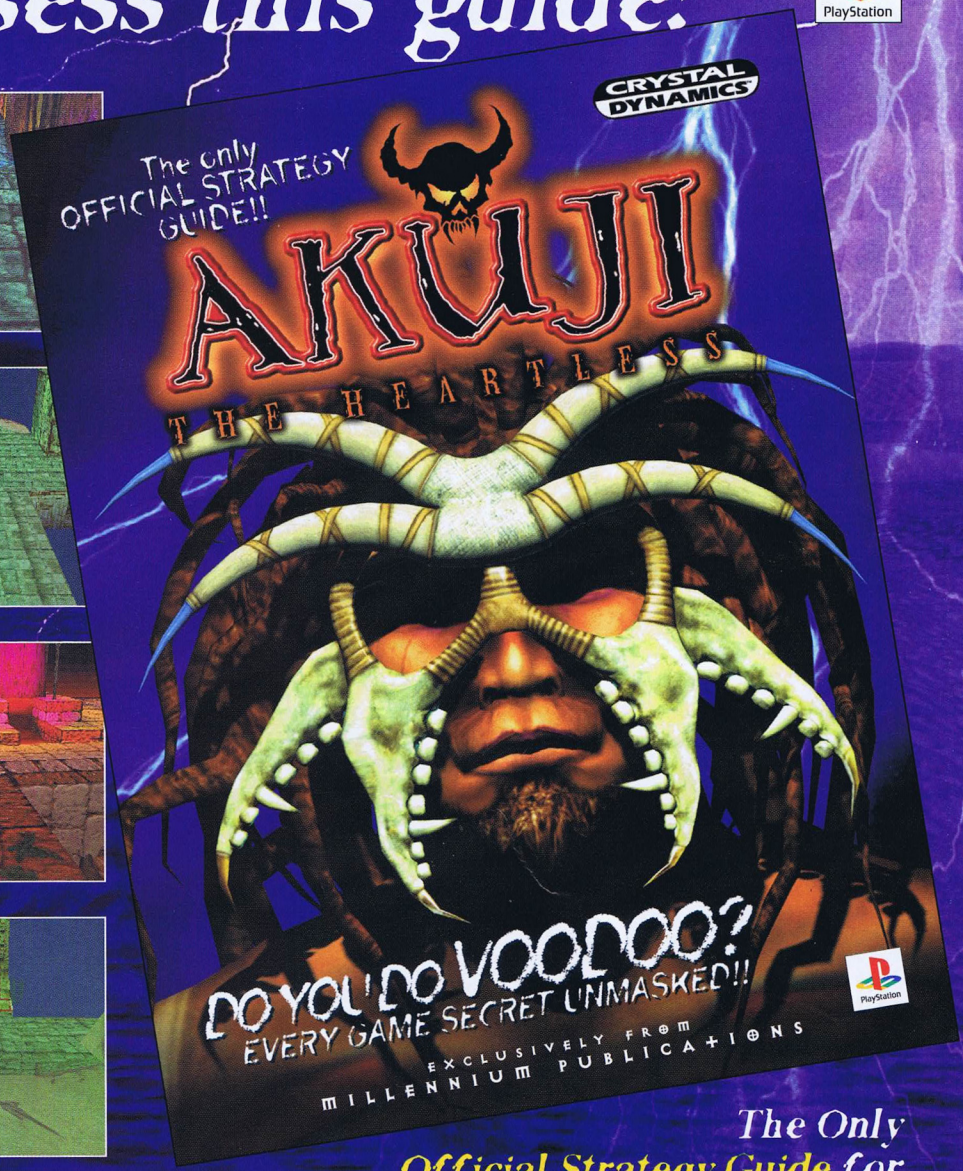












PlayStation

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A.D.V. FILMS PRESENTS

TOP FIVE ANIME

GAMERS' REPUBLIC EDITORS' TOP FIVE

D. Halverson

1. My Dear Marie ADV Films
2. Ruin Explorers ADV Films
3. Golgo13:Q.B. Urban Vision
4. Slayers Movie ADV Films
5. Key the Metal Idol VIZ



B. Williams

1. Ping Pong Club CPM
2. Ushio & Tora ADV Films
3. Darkstalkers VIZ
4. Cyber City OEDO Manga
5. My Neighbor Totoro Fox



M. Melton

1. Patlabor CPM
2. Dragonball Z Pioneer
3. M.Knight Rayearth Clamp
4. Slayers Software Sculptors
5. Blueseed ADV Films



GAMERS' REPUBLIC READERS' TOP FIVE

1. **Evangelion**
   ADV Films
2. **Ranma 1/2**
   VIZ
3. **Tenchi Muyo**
   Pioneer
4. **Slayers**
   Software Sculptors
5. **Ruin Explorers**
   ADV Films



TOP FIVE ANIME CONTEST!

This Month's Winners:

1. **Aaron Shapiro**
   Grapevine , Texas
2. **Travis Miles**
   Mesa, Arizona
3. **Randi Etrekin**
   Belton , Montana

Congratulations to this month's winners!

To enter the *ADV/Gamers' Republic Top Five Anime Contest*, simply send us a list of your favorite five anime, new or old. Make sure to include your name, address and age, and send it to: ***Gamers' Republic Top Five Anime, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, suite 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361***. First prize is Shinji's EVA-01 (which stands over 20 inches tall) and *Evangelion 1* through *13*!! Second Prize: Any two ADV releases and an ADV T-Shirt. Third Prize: Any 1 ADV release. All three winners receive a *GR* subscription. For your free ADV catalog (and this is one cool catalog) write to: ***AD Vision, 5750 Blintiff #217, Houston, TX 77036.***

No purchase necessary, void where prohibited, not responsible for lost or damaged luggage, so speak up and tell me right now!! d'yo hear? Do it now....Bay 12 please...



GR Reader survey

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
e-mail address _____

While you could fill out the information on this page, carefully tear it out, and mail it to the address below, may we suggest making a photocopy first? Or better yet, buy two issues of GR. One to cut up and one for your collection...

What is your age? _____

How much time do you spend reading each issue of Gamers' Republic?
- ❑ less than 30 minutes
- ❑ less than one hour
- ❑ one to two hours
- ❑ more than two hours

How many times will you go back to look at a previous issue?
- ❑ 1-3
- ❑ 4-6
- ❑ more than 6

How many people do you show the magazine to?
- ❑ 1-3
- ❑ 4-6
- ❑ more than 6

Which other magazines are you currently purchasing?
- ❑ EGM
- ❑ GamePro
- ❑ Next Generation
- ❑ PC Gamer
- ❑ Computer Gaming World
- ❑ PSM
- ❑ Other: _____

_____

Where do you buy most of your magazines?
- ❑ Software store
- ❑ Book Store
- ❑ Newsstand
- ❑ Grocery/Drug Store
- ❑ Mini Mart
- ❑ Subscription
- ❑ Other: _____

_____

Which system(s) do you currently use?
- ❑ Nintendo64
- ❑ PlayStation
- ❑ Saturn
- ❑ Genesis
- ❑ Super NES
- ❑ GameGear
- ❑ Gameboy
- ❑ Other: _____

Do you own a PC?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

If so, is it used for gaming?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

How many hours a week do you play games?
- ❑ under 5
- ❑ 5-10
- ❑ 10-20
- ❑ 20-40
- ❑ more than 40

How many console games do you purchase per year?
- ❑ New: _____
- ❑ Used: _____

How many PC games do you purchase per year?
- ❑ New: _____
- ❑ Used: _____

How many games (PC or console) do you rent per year?
- ❑ _____

What are your favorite PC/console genres?
- ❑ 2D Action
- ❑ 3D Action
- ❑ Action/RPG
- ❑ Arcade Racing
- ❑ Racing/Combat
- ❑ Flight/Race Sim
- ❑ 3D Shooting
- ❑ Puzzle
- ❑ RTS
- ❑ Corridor Shooter
- ❑ Role Playing
- ❑ 2D Fighting
- ❑ 3D Fighting
- ❑ Soccer
- ❑ Golf
- ❑ Football
- ❑ Baseball
- ❑ Basketball
- ❑ Tennis
- ❑ Futuristic Sports
- ❑ Other: _____

_____

Do you prefer hand drawn or polygonal characters?
- ❑ Hand Drawn
- ❑ Polygonal

Are you offended by violence and/or nudity in video games?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Do you or would you buy a game soundtrack?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Where do you purchase your games?
- ❑ Local retailer
- ❑ Phone/mail order
- ❑ Online
- ❑ Other: _____

Do you purchase import games?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

If so, why?
- ❑ Game not available in U.S.
- ❑ Import has better packaging
- ❑ Game comes out in Japan first
- ❑ Other: _____

Do you buy Japanese animation?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

If so, how many videos per year?
- ❑ 1-3
- ❑ 4-6
- ❑ 7-10
- ❑ more than 10

Do you prefer anime subbed or dubbed?
- ❑ Subtitled
- ❑ Overdubbed

Tell 'em what they could win, Johnny!

This month it's an **ultimate PC gaming system,** including a 300 mHz Pentium 2, Voodoo 2 Card, Sound Card, Speakers with subwoofer, 19" monitor, plenty of RAM and disk space, and a year's supply of Rice-a-Roni, the San Francisco treat. A winner will be selected at random from surveys we receive.



Settle down, Francis, this is only a representation of what you could win. We're still collecting all the best parts for this baby...

Send your completed survey forms to: Gamers' Republic Reader Survey, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, suite 111, Westlake Village, CA 91361

On second thought, let's nix the Rice-a-Roni, and just give away the computer.

codex republica

Codex loses a page this month to make way for our massive import coverage. It's also very N64 heavy for some reason. Oh well.

F-Zero X





Note: codes are for the Japanese version

All tracks, ships, and difficulty levels:
Press L, Z, R, C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, Start at the mode selection screen.

Alternate colors:
Select a ship, then press R or Z at the statistics screen.

Mini-racers:
Hold L + R + C-Up + C-Down + C-Left + C-Right at the ship selection screen.

Preview ship:
Select a ship, then press C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, or C-Right at the statistics screen.

Joker Cup tracks:
Win the Jack, Queen and King Cups under the "Standard" difficulty level. A Joker Cup, with six bonus tracks, will be available for play.

X-Cup tracks:
Win the Jack, Queen, King, and Joker Cups under the "Expert" difficulty level to enjoy these six randomly generated courses.

Master difficulty level:
Win the Jack, Queen, King, and Joker Cups under all three difficulty levels.

View lead time:
Press L during a GP race to view the time between your racer and the leader (if not already in first place), or between your racer and the closest competitor (if already in first-place).

Preview ship:
Press C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, or C-Right at the customization screen to view your ship from various elevations.

PlayStation

Big head mode:
Enter BIGHEAD BOBBY as a name at the player creation screen.

Flat head mode:
Enter COINHEAD COREY as a name at the player creation screen.



Phallus mode:
Enter GEORGE GIRAFFE as a name at the player creation screen.

Long arms:
Enter MONKEY MICKEY as a name at the player creation screen.

Short arms:
Enter SHRIMPY SEAN as a name at the player creation screen.

Big players:
Enter BIG BEN as a name at the player creation screen.

Small players:
Enter TINY TOM as a name at the player creation screen.

Reversed animations:
Enter LAMEBOY LENNY as a name at the player creation screen.

NINTENDO64 IMPORT





NFL Extreme

mission impossible









A BAD VOICE SAMPLE WILL CONFIRM CORRECT CODE ENTRY.

KID MODE:
PRESS C-DOWN, C-UP, R, L, Z AT THE MISSION SELECTION SCREEN.

BIG FEET MODE:
PRESS C-DOWN, R, Z, C-RIGHT, C-LEFT AT THE MISSION SELECTION SCREEN.

BIG HEAD MODE:
PRESS C-DOWN, R, C-UP, L, C-LEFT AT THE MISSION SELECTION SCREEN.

GIANT HEAD MODE:
PRESS C-DOWN, L, C-UP, C-RIGHT, L AT THE MISSION SELECTION SCREEN.

7.65 SILENCER GUN:
PRESS C-UP, L, C-RIGHT, C-LEFT, C-UP AT THE MISSION SELECTION SCREEN TO RECEIVE THIS WEAPON WITH 30 ROUNDS.

9MM HIGH-POWER GUN:
PRESS R, L, C-DOWN, C-UP, C-UP AT THE MISSION SELECTION SCREEN TO RECEIVE THIS WEAPON WITH 30 ROUNDS.

UZI:
PRESS C-RIGHT, C-LEFT, C-RIGHT, C-DOWN, R AT THE MISSION SELECTION SCREEN TO RECEIVE THIS WEAPON WITH 30 ROUNDS.

MINI-ROCKET LAUNCHER:
PRESS R, L, C-LEFT, C-RIGHT, C-DOWN AT THE MISSION SELECTION SCREEN TO RECEIVE THIS WEAPON WITH 30 ROCKETS.

TURBO MODE:
PRESS C-UP, Z, C-UP, Z, C-UP AT THE MISSION SELECTION SCREEN.

cardinal syn

ALL CODES ENTERED WHEN "PRESS START" APPEARS

FIGHT AS BIMORPHIA:	PRESS RIGHT X3, DOWN, SQUARE
FIGHT AS JUNI:	PRESS UP, LEFT, LEFT, UP, SQUARE
FIGHT AS KAHN:	PRESS UP X2, DOWN X2, TRIANGLE
FIGHT AS MOLOCH:	PRESS UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT, SQUARE
FIGHT AS MONGWAN:	PRESS DOWN X3, UP, TRIANGLE
FIGHT AS REDEMPTOR:	PRESS UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, CIRCLE
FIGHT AS STYGIAN:	PRESS LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, TRIANGLE
FIGHT AS VODU:	PRESS LEFT X3 UP, CIRCLE WHEN

super robot spirits

FIGHT AS MASTER GUNDAM: DEFEAT MASTER GUNDAM THREE TIMES IN STORY MODE. MASTER GUNDAM SHOULD NOW BE SELECTABLE IN STORY MODE.

FIGHT AS DEVIL GUNDAM: SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE STORY MODE USING ALL CHARACTERS. THEN, SELECT MASTER GUNDAM AS A FIGHTER AND DEFEAT DEVIL GUNDAM IN 64 MODE.

FIGHT AS JUDECCA: ACCUMULATE AT LEAST THREE HUNDRED HOURS OF GAME PLAY.

SUPER MODE SHINING GUNDAM: WIN AT LEAST TWENTY MATCHES AS SHINING GUNDAM IN VS. MODE. THEN, HIGHLIGHT SHINING GUNDAM ON THE CHARACTER SELECTION SCREEN AND PRESS START.

HIDDEN TRACK: WIN THE CHAMPIONSHIP UNDER THE PROFESSIONAL DIFFICULTY LEVEL.

VIEW CREDITS AND GALLERY MODE: WIN THE CHAMPIONSHIP UNDER THE ROOKIE DIFFICULTY LEVEL. OPTIONS TO VIEW THE CREDITS AND GALLERY WILL APPEAR ON THE OPENING SCREEN.

TEAM EXTREME DRIVERS: EARN A 100% SKILL LEVEL IN CHALLENGE MODE. AN OPTION TO VIEW THE CREDITS WILL APPEAR ON THE OPENING SCREEN AND THE TEAM EXTREME SILVER AND GOLD DRIVERS WILL BE AVAILABLE UNDER EXHIBITION, TIME TRIAL AND TWO PLAYER MODES.

s-1 world grand prix

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NINTENDO 64

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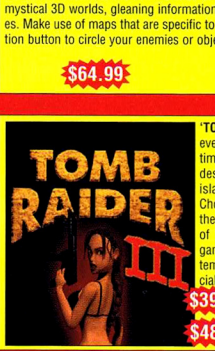
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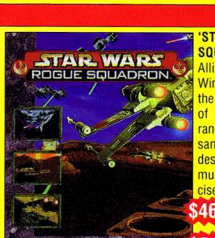
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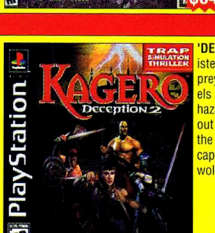
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$49.99 — **Konami (Shooter) Release 10/98 PSX**



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Justice Schools

Soundtrack *Arika*

C-



Justice Schools proves that while the game may be fundamentally exquisite, the soundtrack is nothing more than a bunch of average video game tunes. There are 44 audio tracks on the CD, including incidental spot effects and jingles, and also the main themes from each level. Unfortunately, none of them are as memorable as those of the *Street Fighter* scores that are loved and appreciated by the fans of the genre. This said, the main bulk of the tracks blends into the game reasonably well, but considering Capcom's past aural achievements, *Justice Schools* seems to have suffered from blandness beyond measure. By all means check this CD out if you are a Capcom freak of nature, but if find yourself ignoring the tunes while playing the game, then don't even bother to buy the soundtrack. Without a shadow of a doubt, *Justice Schools* is a topnotch fighting game, but swerve this CD for sure.

Bryn Williams

Deep Fear

Soundtrack *Sega Enterprises, LTD.*

B-



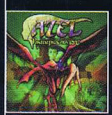
While as a game *Deep Fear* might be a bit crap, at least there's some redemption in the soundtrack. Composed and arranged by the man who brought us the tunes behind such classic anime as *Ghost in the Shell* and *Patlabor*, Sega certainly made the right move securing Kenji Kawai for their last major Saturn title. Resembling more of a movie soundtrack than what you'd find in a game, the selections in the *Deep Fear* soundtrack are long, complex, and not quite as catchy (I doubt you'll be whistling any of these tunes) as what you might be used to, but it represents the dark mood of *Deep Fear* extremely well. There's even a bit of campy original *Star Trek*-ish female vocal "wailing" going on, and a lot of strange breathing - I guess all there to make you believe you're underwater (the game's setting), or something...

Ryan Lockhart

Azel: Panzer Dragoon RPG

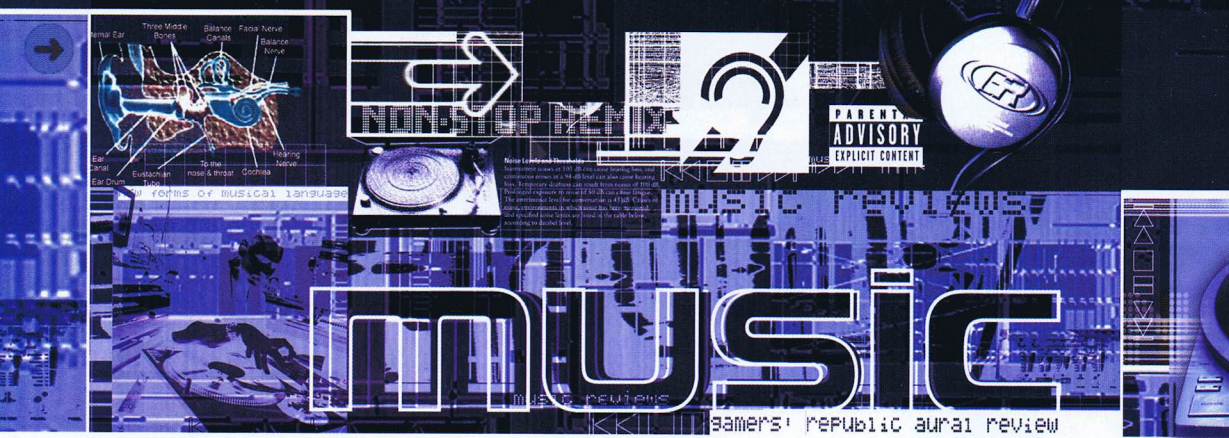
Soundtrack *Marvelous*

B+



I'm obliged to mention the type of *Panzer Dragoon Azel* (Saga) soundtrack we have. It's a package containing a music disc with many, but not all, of the game's tracks, and a short playable demo of the game itself (a journey through disc one's mesmerizing watery canyons). The full score is a twin disk, 40+ track complete compilation, available now. On this music disc, many of the game's best tracks are chronicled. Clocking in at 51 minutes over 18 tracks, chock-full of "...good vibrations from noise" (as the CD label states), the sounds are ambient, the layers are rich, and composition's excellent. If you've played through the game, you'll remember the exotic accompaniment well. In the vein of *Panzer Zwei* (95% PCM), these tracks consistently evoke a sense of wonderment and adventure, even without the full 44.1 kHz treatment, while still matching the theme of each unique environment perfectly. Highly recommended.

Mike Griffin



DLR Band

David Lee Roth *Wawazat!!Records*

B



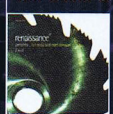
DLR Band proves one thing: Van Halen need Roth a lot more than Roth needs Van Halen. On his first Indie release, DLR whips out the old *Eat 'em Smile* tactics with added wisdom and musical prowess. After the tragedy that was *Van Halen 3*, it's nice to hear shades of what could have been, as Dave has come to his senses, ditched the lounge act and re-entered the genre he helped mold. Where he found John Lowery, who sounds uncannily like Steve Vai, I do not know, but this man can shred. While a few selections are a tad bluesy, for the most part, *DLR Band* is just ass kicking rock, although two tracks "Going Places" and "Black Sand" have all the glimmer of any past VH slow song - a far cry from the heavy handed "King of the Hill" rounding out my top three selections. While *DLR Band* isn't for the earring in the forehead set, it mainly covers women, fast cars, and way to much testosterone, and it sings like a little birdy on a branch to all of those who miss the heyday of VH, Ratt, Cinderella, Motley Crue, Rush, and the like. It's now a studio apt., but welcome home.

Dave Halverson

Renaissance Presents:

Ian Ossia & Nigel Dawson *Passion*

A+



Remember the first time you played *Wipeout*? The perfect blend of speed, imagery and music? How the music elevated the experience? Well, here's the future soundtrack for your next racing game experience. A captivating expansion of the definition of sound, *Renaissance Presents Volume 1* is insanely brilliant. While the domestic music scene is still clamoring to find the new "it" in music (stuck in 1980's retro-polis, it seems), Britain continues to define the future with music that years from now America will perhaps one day understand (probably not). Forget aging has-been rockers, Lilith-whiners, and wanna-be gangstas that seem inescapable in the U.S. nowadays. Across the Atlantic, at UK events such as Renaissance and Cream, DJ's are inducing listeners with refreshing mixes and non-stop grooves that reflect a diverse combination of styles. A two disc set of floor-filling mixes by Ian Ossia and Nigel Dawson, the album is without a blemish.

Gregory Han

Riddim Warfare

DJ Spooky *Outpost Recordings*

A-



This exclusive advance copy of DJ Spooky's newest is the best CD I've heard all issue. From the intro track, "Pandemonium," you know *Riddim Warfare* is going to be a showcase of luscious mixing. Also, Spooky's production standards seem to be better than ever. There are lots of unexpected sources, like acoustic guitar sets, chants, and classical strings. And while you may be accustomed to Spooky's "illbient," ultra-layered, dub-infused soundscapes, *Riddim Warfare* includes many radio friendly tracks, too, such as "Object Unknown" (with hip-hop classic Kool Keith on cameo vocal duty), and "Rekonstruction," lyrically mastered by Organized Konfusion. Check out "A Conversation," a manic DJ duel using "Dumb Mutha Fucka'" (from the Synthetic Fury EP) as wax basis, "Peace in Zaire," a trippy 8-minute dub epic, or "Post-Human Sophistry," a massive layering of D&B-ish abstractions. *Riddim Warfare* is still too hard-core for some, but that's part of its appeal.

Mike Griffin

Daytona 2

Soundtrack *Marvelous*



The very fact that Stuart from *Beavis & Butt-Head* wears a Winger T-shirt should be warning enough about the tunes contained within this 2-CD set. Yes folks, that's right. Winger were dragged out of retirement to record the soundtrack for Sega's imminent *Daytona 2* racer. The game will, of course, be phenomenal, so the question must be asked: why the hell choose Winger? Although what I am about to say is professional suicide for me, I actually think the music suits the game very well. Japanese audiences will be buying this in droves. It's so cheesy that it really gels well with such a prestigious title as *Daytona 2*. The songs are heavy/soft porno-rock with laughably amusing lyrics, and the 2 CDs contain original and instrumental versions. I strongly suggest you get caught up in the frenzy of *Daytona 2* fever before realizing that you should part with cold hard cash for such a product.

Bryn Williams

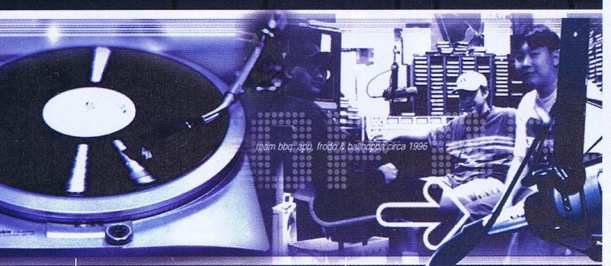
Resident Evil

Soundtrack *VIZ Music*



Two years. That's how long this soundtrack has been out in Japan, based on a game that's even older than that. You have to wonder why Viz picked this particular time to release *Resident Evil: Original Soundtrack Remix*. Whatever the reason, it really doesn't matter, as this CD is so good, I'm just happy it's being released domestically. *Resident Evil* was a classic game, and it had a classic soundtrack full of deep, foreboding tracks, all excellently composed. *RE Remix* allows you to enjoy this music once again, but now with the benefit of additional instruments. Even "The Moonlight Sonata" (ahem), the tune you had to dink out on the piano, is here as a full multi-piece presentation, along with enhanced versions of every other song you can think of. The 34 tracks take you back through the game in order, and even keep the spirit alive by including voice and sound effect samples. Great stuff, and a must-buy for any *RE* fan.

Ryan Lockhart



Star Soldier

Soundtrack *Pony*



It's always a nice "time-bona" when a game music BGM CD based on a cart game includes arranged versions of choice selections. Such is the case with Ichiro Shimakura's *Star Soldier Vanishing Earth* soundtrack from Scitron, which includes two arranged scores comprising 10 of the CD's 54 minutes of hard-core shooter-tastic techno. This is some of the best Nintendo 64 cart music to date, on par with the likes of Treasure's *Mischief Makers* and Konami's *Rakuga Kids*, two other cart music powerhouses. *SSVE* is one of those games that is driven by its score, and music that can drive a game stirs the soul. Well, at least the gamer's soul.

Dave Halverson

Brave Fencer

Soundtrack *SquareSoft*



Three words: Packaging and illustration book. (Ok, four.) Not only is Tsuyoshi Sekito's *BFM* soundtrack one of Square's most epic, but it comes in an incredible fluorescent orange box with embossed art, and an extremely cool illustration book depicting character art and conceptual sketches. Accept no substitutes (especially of the cheesy Taiwan variety) and look for the authentic Japanese version only, please. The music, a two-CD, 78 selection set, of which you'll listen to a thousand times, is a legendary compilation of orchestral rhythms and progressive tones delivered as only Square Tsuyoshi can. This is game music at its finest.

Dave Halverson

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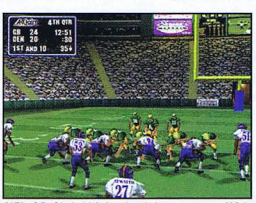


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RUSH HOUR

new line cinema **RATED PG-13** *in theaters September 18*





Put together a fast-talking, loud-mouth cop with a quiet, masterful, martial arts pro detective, and you have a recipe not for disaster, but for the latest buddy movie. It's been 12 years since Jackie Chan starred in an American production, but now he's kicking back with Chris Tucker in *Rush Hour.*

Chan is Detective Inspector Lee, the only man capable of capturing one of Hong Kong's most powerful crimelords, Juntao. With the help of the Chinese Consular (and lots of kicking and punching, of course!), Lee manages to uncover more than $500 million in art, weapons and drugs. But this is not the end of the story – it's merely the beginning, and Juntao is about to make a sinister return.

When Consul Han is sent to L.A. on a diplomatic mission, his daughter is abducted and her kidnappers are demanding $50 million for her return. Although the FBI assures Han that his daughter will be returned safely, Han only trusts one man to do the job properly, and that man is, of course, Detective Lee. But this is America, and the FBI isn't too happy about outside interference, so they assign rogue detective James Carter (Tucker) to keep Lee away from the case.

Lee soon manages to slip away from Carter and infiltrates the investigation. However, as the FBI doesn't seem to want the help of either of them, the reluctant misfits (who can't even agree on what music to play in the car!) decide to team up and take on the case themselves. With the help of L.A.P.D. bomb expert Tania Johnson (Elizabeth Pena), they become caught up in a deadly scenario—that is, when they're not totalling a whole city or leaving a trail of chaos behind them.

Expect to see all the usual array of action, amazing martial arts and death-defying stunts from Jackie Chan, coupled with the wise-cracking humor of Tucker, which together make a surprisingly entertaining mix.

Angela Harrod

cinematrix

From cult movies to blockbusters... film entertainment for the video gamer



RONIN

RATED R *in theaters sept 18*

What's the connection between a samurai warrior and a mysterious briefcase? The answer is *Ronin.*

First I'll clear up the samurai thing: a warrior who is sworn to protect his liege lord, but fails and his liege is killed, would suffer great shame and would become a bandit-for-hire, or Ronin.

Now you get the idea for the suspense-thriller movie *Ronin*; it's all about honor and defending someone or something that you would die for. Only this time it's a silver briefcase. What's in the rogue receptacle is a complete enigma to everyone except the mysterious employer who hires Sam (Robert De Niro) and an international covert ops team to steal the case. But loyalties are on offer to the highest bidder, so the real motives of the group are as unknown as the contents of the case.

The members of the team are all strangers to each other, but are experts in their field, including weapons specialist (Sean Bean), French coordinator Vincent and Deirdre (Natascha McElhone), an Irish operative who is also the client's only contact.

Producer Frank Mancuso Jr. describes *Ronin* as "...an aggressive story that doesn't get lost in the mechanics of an action film." This may well be true, but there's still plenty of action scenes, an intriguing plot and an array of more-than-decent actors to make this a must-see.

Angela Harrod



ANTZ

NOT YET RATED *in theaters oct 2*

If there's one creature in this world with little chance of being an individual, then it has to be the ant, and that's the focus of new computer animation movie *Antz.*

Starring some very famous voices (Woody Allen, Sharon Stone, Sylvester Stallone to name a few), the story follows *Z-4195* (Allen), a congenital misfit who just wants to be his own insect and do things his way. This doesn't go down too well with the other members of the colony, and Z finds himself in over his antennae, especially when he falls for the daughter of the Queen, Princess Bala (Stone).

A remarkable twist of fate saves the day for Z, and transforms him from a mindless nobody to a hero. Not just a hero, but a revolutionary who leads the way for singularity and being an ant in one's own right.

Not surprisingly for Dreamworks, the animation and effects are truly stunning. Although we're getting used to movies made entirely from CG, it's always good to see things going one step further with more fluid, detailed animation and characters, and *Antz* does just that. Coupled with a decent story line, this should be a blast. Next time you're reaching for the bug spray, think again; that might be a tiny revolutionary you're blasting off the face of the Earth.

Angela Harrod



MERLIN

NOT RATED *vhs/dvd*

It's rare that a DVD of a TV series will make the hallowed movie pages of *GR*, but once in a while an exception comes along, and *Merlin* is pretty exceptional.

A first in any Arthurian adaptation, the story revolves around legendary sorcerer Merlin (no pointy hats and long white beards here) played ably by Sam Neill. The story follows Merlin's life through to old age, but centers mainly on his confrontations with the evil Queen Mab (Miranda Richardson), his quest for the Holy Grail, educating King Arthur and his lifelong love for Nimue (Isabella Rossellini). The all-star cast also includes Helena Bonham Carter as the evil Morgana Le Fey, Martin Short as Mab's sidekick Frik and Rutger Hauer as Lord Vortigern.

As well as the story being totally enchanting, the visual effects are amazing. *Merlin* has a staggering 500 special effects, compared to a big-screen movie with an average of 150. All effects blend seamlessly and vary from morphing characters to fiery dragons.

Downsides? To be honest, I can't think of any, and who am I to argue with 15 Emmy nominations? Whether or not you're into the Arthurian Legend, this is seriously good stuff.

Digitally Mastered DVD enhancements include "Making of," Production Notes and Cast and Crew information. 140 minutes.

Angela Harrod

PATIENT RUSH TO STARDOM

an interview with Jackie Chan

GR: Although many of your movies are light-hearted, Rush Hour seems much more humorous. Do you enjoy humor or prefer things a bit more serious?

JC: Yes, I do prefer to make people laugh than to make them cry! Imagine, you can hardly say to a friend, "Go to see that movie and have a good cry!"

Did you sustain any injuries during the filming of Rush Hour?

Fortunately not! Americans are so much more careful with stunt work. It is a luxury that we Asian counterparts cannot afford yet! Guess [the] life of a martial artist is by comparison "cheaper" in this part of the world. We just use our guts and do it! No insurance or union to stop us!

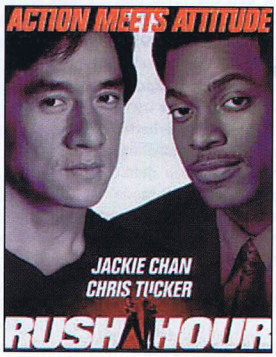


Are you willing to try any stunt the directors may ask of you, or is there ever a point where you tell yourself "This is too dangerous—I have to draw the line here"?

Of course! I'm no superman! Frankly, we do not have the technical know-how our American or even Japanese counterparts do. But in our own way, we learn from experience. We know when we can do something and when we can't. If you ask me to jump down from the 15th floor without empty carton boxes laid out (note: it's carton boxes, not air bags!), I will not do it!

Did you do a lot of the martial arts consulting on the movie, or did they have a separate choreographer?

I had the opportunity to work with one of the best in Hollywood: Terry Leonard. I've known him for quite a long time. Our ways may be different, but we respect each other's work and my boys and me get along fine with him and his assistants. We made a good team.



What was it like working with Chris Tucker?

Chris is a very "serious" comedian. He may seem jovial and casual, but he makes it a point to view every single shot after shooting to make it perfect. I think he will be one of the top in America soon. My only difficulty sometimes is he talks so fast, I have trouble catching every word he said. My loss—I probably missed a lot of jokes!

Do you have a favorite scene in the movie?

Not really. I wish the action sequences could have been longer but I'm told that it's not what the American producers (or audience) want. So I said, OK. This is my first Hollywood movie after a long time and I've prepared myself to go with the Americans and learn.

What do you think are the major differences between your Asian movies and the American ones?

First, the budget. How I wish I could have an American budget to produce a Hong Kong film! Secondly, the schedule. The Americans are really great at that. Not like Asia. In my films, there is just no time schedule, no budget control. Fortunately, everything is so much cheaper here, which allows us to spend a longer period shooting. Thirdly, I guess it's the special effects. Almost non-existent in Hong Kong. In fact, my greatest hope in going to America is to learn and see what special sparks will fly when computer technology is married to my physical skills.

Do you think there will ever come a day when you tire of Martial Arts movies?

Yes, but not for the next few years! I still have a lot of great action ideas in my mind that I want to put on screen. However, if a producer is willing to pay me the same amount of money to do a love story, I'll do it without hesitation! A run on the beach in slow motion, the female lead comes from the other side, we meet, I lift her up and swing her around and end up with a long kiss. Surely that's much easier than crashing through a window or jumping from the balcony of one building onto that of another many feet across the road!

Which is the most physically demanding movie you have ever worked on?

Each one seems to be demanding when you're shooting it. Funny thing is when you look back at them, you think it could have been done better. And when it finally it is shown on the screen and the audience applauds, everything becomes worthwhile and you'll do it again no matter how demanding!

Do you think you'll ever direct or go more into producing in the future?

I'm already doing both and have been for a long time. Many of my own movies are directed by me, including my most recent *Who Am I*. As for production, let me say without bragging that the award-winning dramas Stanley Kwan's *Rouge* and *Centre Stage* were both produced by me. Since the Company would not allow me to act in a drama (it's just not economical, they say!), I produce them. Simply because I think movie topics should be diversified so that they can cater to the audience, whatever their tastes.

You've worked on a video game before; did you enjoy the experience?

Anything new is kind of fun! Motion capture is something I've never done before. It's amazing to have yourself "wired" from head to toe, do some basic movements and then see what the computer masters can do! It's kind of scary to think that one day, the person may be taken over by the computer!

You're working on a video game to be released next year; can you tell us more about it?

My manager Willie is probably the best one who can answer that better! I only work, he handles the business side of things. But yes, you're right, I believe the game is targeted to hit the market next year.

Do you play a lot video games?

Any game I've touched usually has my name as the highest score! Want to challenge?

Used to and I'm pretty good at it, too! Any game I've touched usually has my name as the highest score! Want to challenge?

Which is your favorite?

No special favorites. They're all fun, especially those that demand the use of body and all limbs.

A lot of Hollywood actors are getting into video games. Why do you think that is?

Not at all surprising. Isn't that the trend? When I was a kid, marbles, kites or tops were the only things to play with. Now kids are much luckier. They have so much to choose from now (a bit too much maybe!).



What is your next movie or game project?

There are many movie projects under consideration now but we've not made a final choice yet. I shall always continue to do Chinese movies (Asia is my territory) but if the West accepts me too, I'll probably spend more time making Hollywood movies too. As for games, let's see how my first one turns out! ***Angela Harrod***

FALLOUT

Should you wish to put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard), please write to:
Fallout, Gamers' Republic, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, Suite 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361 USA (editorial@gamersrepublic.com).

Dear GR,
Right now the biggest obstacle facing the success of the Dreamcast (ugh, that name is still annoying) is Sega of America, yet again.

They apparently think that by pissing off Saturn owners, we'll all rush to dump our Saturns and pick up their new toy, happy to be rid of their old, slow machine. How else would you explain this stupid ad (which surprisingly didn't turn up in every game mag) that makes light of the hell that people went through to find *Panzer Dragoon Saga*?! [*Greg is referring to Sega's Panzer Saga ad which would have you run around the neighborhood with a mask on pretending you're playing Panzer because you couldn't find the game. Hey that's actually kind a funny... but this subject is important.*]

Now we have to forget about the Saturn (a year should be long enough, right?) and run out to put down cash on their next big thing. Meanwhile, Japanese gamers have the misfortune to play junk like *Grandia*, *Shining Force 3* parts *2&3*, *Cotton 2*, *Phantasy Star Collection*, 100 other crappy new games, AND they even get new stuff after the DC launch - awful for them, right? Enough kidding! Sega of America still has not learned a damn thing if they think that just introducing a new, better machine will make them #1 - they should know by now that Saturn owners should be given more than a few crumbs to settle our stomachs until next year. Otherwise, the stores will be pretty quiet come 11/99. And if they have already planned any more Saturn games for a U.S. release, don't "surprise" us with titles - just tell us what's coming out, and when. If they need ideas, refer to my earlier selections (I'm shocked that they didn't port *Phantasy Star Collection* - all the @#*$ games are in english already! Just fix the spelling & grammar and release the set!).

Well, enough bile. Your magazine is getting better and better with each issue (although the typos are too frequent). Keep up the great work!
Greg Wilcox
Bronx, NYC

Dear Greg,
This Sega taunt does seem rather miss-guided. As I specified in the Publisher's Log this month, Sega fans deserve some respect right now. You certainly don't want to set us off. We've had to endure possibly the worst handling of a console (2nd only to Atari and their cat of one life) in gaming history, the mistreatment of our beloved Sonic, and watch as they let import after import fly by while they tried to squeeze everything but the right games on to an amazing console. Take a look at Astal, Guardian Heroes, Princess Crown, or Clockwork Knight 2 to realize the power of the SS. Why they didn't exploit the Saturn's strengths and vast import library remains a mystery... even to them. Sega is almost completely re-staffed. So while the taunt does seem out of line, remember that Sega have been big on admitting that they've screwed up in the past - through jokes. Kevin Nealon went off on Sega at the DC launch at E3! So maybe this is just their way of apologizing in an ulterior sort of way. Honestly, I think you're going to see a new Sega when the Dreamcast hits. They've been great with us so far.
I too had a difficult time finding PDS, but it was worth it. It's one of the year's best games.
P.S. Wut tipe-o's?

Dear GR,
I could not disagree more with your review of F1WGP! I mean, the developers are really limited when working on a CART game and the amount of detail that they were able to get in there deserves a lot more credit than you gave it. Two things you didn't mention: the rain effect and the recording of all the names of the drivers. The rain effect is the best yet seen on a console and the game showcases the best use of sound on the 64 yet! They recorded all the names of the drivers, and the voice that speaks them from the pits is crisp and clear. Yes, the physics do lack. But compared to what on the N64? *San Francisco Rush*? For not being as good as the physics in Ubisoft's *F1 Racing* Sim, it's the next best thing. Don't even try to tell me that *F1 CE* by Psygnosis has better physics. I like that game, but it has nowhere near realistic car control. Lastly, you didn't even mention the Challenge mode. That mode is original and innovative. It is my humble opinion that your review was unfair and uninformed. In my book, *F1WGP* gets an A-.
Brad Styke

Dear Brad,
I also bought F1WGP and am having a great time with it. I wouldn't give it an A-, but perhaps a B. It does have one heck of a learning curve, but once you get it dialed-in, it's not so bad. The environments are excellent as are the weather fx. You have to realize though, that we have seven editors here reviewing games, and while we do assign games to those most qualified for each specific genre, once in awhile (though not very often) we disagree by a grade or more amongst ourselves. One possible solution is to have a counterpoint on any review where we are divided by a full grade or more. We just don't want to rehash the three-across method. Most of the time we pretty much agree, so who wants to read three guys saying the same thing? Anyway, point well taken. We're discussing this now so you'll likely see a change by the November issue. Now go race!

Dear GR,
I have been reading in your magazine as well as others about the importance of new games being revolutionary. I agree that games should continue to improve upon each other and build into better games. But I can't help but want something else. What else could you possible want you ask? Well, I've been playing *Golden Eye* longer and more avidly than I've played anything else, ever. I want *Perfect Dark* so badly, but who wants to wait another year for that? I want something else to do in the mean time. All I want is more levels to battle in. A swarm of new death match boards would be the answer to everyone's prayers. It would be so easy, a quick fix for all us junkies. All they would have to do is pop a cartridge in that little front port (I hope) and away we could go! Maybe some new wall textures, but hey, I'm not picky. Just give me some new areas to blow up my loved ones in. What do you think? *Return Fire* got a supplement disk for more levels. Rareware could pop out a bonus levels cartridge before Christmas. They would make an absolute killing for very little work or money. *Perfect Dark* will be great, but why not give us a little more to do; some of us may not live long enough to see the next game at the rate good games churn out. So my main point is that what I really want is more of the same. I never thought I'd say it. I don't want to wait. I want more now!
Gregory J. Favro

Dear Gregory,
Goldeneye has a tendency to do this to people. The mixture of sniping and strategically solving missions has and will continue to spawn sequels. Like you ask, though, why not give us more right now and strike while the iron's hot? Well, probably because the team at RARE who made Goldeneye are up to their ears in Perfect Dark. The industry is very deadline intensive right now, especially for Nintendo, who strive to answer the call, whatever it may be, with a strategically placed A+ title. I think the idea is solid though, and I think Nintendo do also, as this is pretty much what they had in mind for the 64DD. Zelda was going to feature added DD levels. Unfortunately technology is flying by so quickly that Nintendo are obviously rethinking their next move. I wouldn't be surprised if something like what you're requesting comes to fruition sometime soon, but in the case of Goldeneye, I'd have to say it truly is game over.

Dear GR staff,
I was reading the August issue and saw the reviews for music from *Riven* and *Road Rash* and I got to thinking. I have been trying out dif-

ferent RPGs for the PlayStation (just got one for my son *wink*), I have *FF7* and am now playing (rented) *FFTactics* (love it). Anyway, I think the music from *FFTactics* is very cool and would consider getting a soundtrack if there is such a thing available. Is there? I would also like to hear about other game music you guys think is good. As I'm new to the PS and its games, my game experience is rather limited. Also, can you tell me of any places where game soundtracks can be ordered? I don't recall ever seeing any at the local music store.

Thanks

Richard Francis

PS - Tell Dave Halverson that his review of "VAST" has me intrigued. I'm gonna see if i can find it.

Dear Richard,

Japanese Game music soundtracks have been available in Japan since the 8-bit days. The Japanese know a good thing when they hear one. However, for one reason or another, the trend hasn't caught on here. Just recently a few selected soundtracks have become available, but nowhere near enough for the genre to have the impact that it should. Some forward thinking business man or woman will undoubtedly see and seize the potential for licensing and selling these fine wares, but in the meantime, you'll have to look towards import mail-order houses or better yet, Japanese malls like the Yohan center in L.A. Most Japanese bookstores will order them for you. A word of caution, though. When ordering online or over the phone from a mail order, always ask and make sure that you are not being sold a Chinese or Taiwan CD. One the coolest aspects of buying game music from Japan is enjoying the amazing printing and packaging they do. I suggest finding a good reputable Japanese store and sticking with it. The people are always really nice and you can pick up all the cool import game mags while you're there! Oh, and if you haven't found VAST yet, you can check them out at elektra.com! Good luck!

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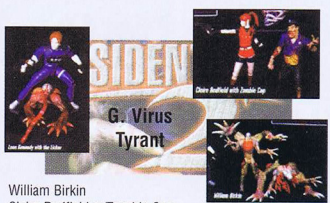




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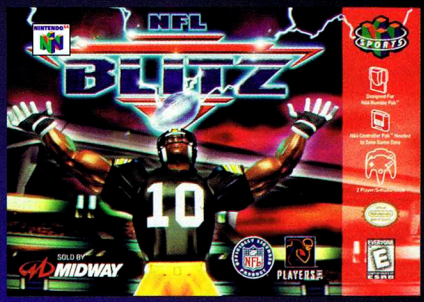
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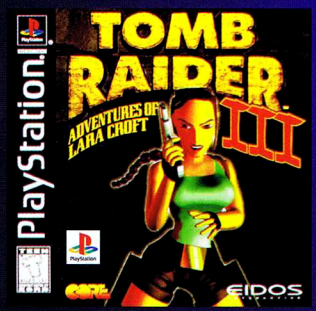
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coming next month

Earthworm Jim 3D



Earthworm Jim is about to return on all three platforms, and by golly if we're not going to have a *Jim*-tastic PlayStation preview for all of you good folks in the next issue.

When Jim gets knocked unconscious by, what else, a falling cow, he finds himself transported into the twisted realms of his own brain. Now he must battle through his subconscious in order to wake up and return to the real world! Developers VIS have come a long way since we last visited *Jim 3D*. With six vast worlds to explore and over 80 characters to harass, expect one groovy new game-o-*Jim*. We'll unearth his first foray into the world of 3D in a special *EWJ* feature. Also coming next month, look for more on *Rayman 2*, *Dune 2000*, *Tonic Trouble*, and *Metal Gear Solid*, along with our usual dose of Dreamcast, as Sega's dream machine grows ever closer to that November launch in Japan. We'll also bring you an in depth report on the ECTS, Europe's answer to our E3. It may not be as hot and sweaty, but a few surprises are bound to surface. *Spice 2* perhaps!

Of course, it's way before the fact, and my crystal ball's in the shop, so I've no idea what else we'll come up with, but I'm sure it'll all be great. Maybe Ed could leave me a little less room for text next month... "Rigin-friggin-nogin-ragun..."

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ISSUE 6:
STREET DATE:
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AT LEAST NOT UNTIL HE

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